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1913

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THE

Winning of Latane Cashton



BY

OLIVER PERRY PARKER

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

PHILIP P. CASHTON—President Cashton Phosphate Co., and father of Latane.
MRS. PHILIP P. CASHTON—Step-mother of Latane, and chief aid to first villain.
RUTH SPAULDING—Private Secretary to Mr. Cashton, and wife of first villain.
JULIUS SEARS—First Villain; man of millions, and suitor for Latane's hand.
ROBERT SPARR—Second Villain; superintendent Cashton Phosphate Co., and friend of Sears.
CYRUS W. GILBERT—Ex-President Upland Phosphate Co.
TRUSTY HOPKINS—Faithful negro servant in the Cashton home and factory.
FRANK EFFORTON—Faithful employee of Mr. Cashton, and loves his daughter.
LATANE CASHTON—Faithful daughter of Mr. Cashton, and loves Frank.

—ALSO—

TOMMIE HEINZ—Office boy.
RICHARD PRINCE—Messenger Boy.
HARRY FOREST—News Boy.

SYNOPSIS

Act 1.—Scene, President's office, Cashton Phosphate Co.
Act 2.—Scene 1. Laboratory in same plant; Scene 2, Same as Act 1. Same day.
Act 3.—Scene 1. Library in Cashton home. Same eve. Scene 2, Same as Scene 1, Act. 2.
Act 4.—Scene, President's office, Upland Phosphate Co.
Act 5.—Scene, Poverty stricken home of Mr. Cashton three months later.
NOTE—The staging for the above is very simple and easy, and should be carefully worked out.

ACT I

Scene—President's office, Cashton Phosphate Co.

Stage properties—One or more office desks with flat tops. President's desk equipped with telephone. Office chairs, filing cabinet, and such other furnishings as can be had. Doors right and left.

(Slow curtain discovering Trusty dusting office. When curtain well up he stops and stretches, yawning. Telephone, short ring. He jumps and grunts, cutting yawn short.)

TRUSTY—What wus dat? (Looks about.) I must er busted my year drum. (Tel. rings again longer.) O, I see (points to telephone). Somebody wants to speak wid me. (Struts round behind President's desk, sits in chair with dignity; takes down receiver). Hello. * * Huh. * * * Dis am de president's office. * * * I am de presidnet (Draws himself up and winks at audience.) Whats dat? * * * Git up closer; can't git what you sayin'. * * * De consulomation ob what? * * * Really, now, I don't think it will suit me, but I'll take de matter under consideration and call you later when I'm not so very busy. (Slams up receiver.) I guess dat'll hold 'em for er while. I bet dat tattlephone gits me into trouble yit. But I feel duty bound (Places feet on desk) ter do all I kin fer de vancement of de company.

(Enter Messenger Boy. Trusty slides from chair to floor and begins dusting vigorously, head bowed.) Good mawning, Mr. Cashton.

RICHARD PRINCE—Hello Trusty. You missed your guess.

TRUSTY—(Rising and sighing deeply.) Dis is de fust time I wus ever glad to see *you*. Good mawning'.

RICHARD PRINCE—Here, sign for these messages. (Offers book.)

TRUSTY—Not me. De sec'tary what signs for dat dope 'll be here in a minute. Sit down and wait.

HARRY FOREST—(Is heard outside crying papers.) Morning papers. Paper, mister. (Enters.) Hee Dick. How's tips this morning? (Dick rattles money.)

Enter Tommy.

TOMMY—Where did you get so much rattlings?

HARRY, rattling his money—O, we're loaded for bears or bulls either.

TOMMY—Well, now, I'm either (draws coin from pocket); just name your weapons.

HARRY—Phew, just look at the nerve.

DICK—It won't last. He's bluffing.

TOMMY—There's a way to find out.

HARRY—Name it.

DICK—Yes, we call your bluff.

TRUSTY—You chillen stop dat composin'.

TOMMY—Trusty, won't you join us?

TRUSTY—Deed I won't. I'se quit takin' chances.

HARRY—What you taking now, Trusty?

TRUSTY—I ain't takin' none er yo' sass.

DICK—Come on, Harry. Tommy is game.

TOMMY—Yes, I'm waiting. (Spits out in center of stage.) There. Closest man gets the money. (Boys line up to pitch.)

TRUSTY—Take good sight, Tommy. (Boys pitch. Tommy wins. They pitch again. Tommy wins.)

HARRY—Here, you spit-ball pitcher. (They continue to pitch.)

DICK—He can't hold it. (Trusty steps to side and draws coin from his pocket. Spits him a spot.)

TRUSTY—Guess I had better be warning up. (This to audience.) (Takes careful aim and pitches.) I win. (Steps back and pitches again.) I win again. Dat's easy. Here boys, lemme in.

BOYS, TOGETHER—You're in. (They pitch. Dick wins.)

TRUSTY—I'm out. I told you I don't take no chances.

HARRY—Aw, come on. Don't get cold feet.

TRUSTY—I ain't got no cold feet. I jest got some sense, dat's all.

Enter Miss Spaulding.

MISS SPAULDING—Why, what's the matter here?

TRUSTY—'Tain't nothing, Miss Spauldin'. De boys jest telling some jokes.

DICK—Some messages for you, Miss Spaulding. (Offers book. Miss Spaulding signs and returns book. Exit Dick and Harry. Miss Spaulding removes hat and sits at desk, opening messages.)

MISS SPAULDING—Any telephone messages, Trusty?

TRUSTY—(To audience.) I told you dat telephonenumber 'ud git me into trouble. (To Miss Spaulding.) Beg pardon, mum.

MISS SPAULDING—Any telephone messages this morning?

TRUSTY—Only one, and dat wus for me. Jest er little pussional matter. Dat's all.

MISS SPAULDING—(Laughing.) Personal matter?

TOMMY—Yes, you are a very important *pussionage*.

Enter Robert Sparr.

SPARR—Good morning, Miss Spaulding. (Trusty takes his hat and top coat.) Tommy, go down to the mailing room and help with the circulars. Stay all day and get out as many as you can.

TOMMY—Yes, sir. (Exit.)

SPARR—Trusty.

TRUSTY—Yassar.

SPARR—You go down and help with the furnace. (Exit T.) Miss Spaulding, I hope you feel as good as you look this morning. Any word from Mr. Cashton, or Mr. Efforton?

MISS SPAULDING—Yes, sir. Mr. Cashton has wired that he will be in early tomorrow, and Mr. Efforton is expected tonight.

SPARR—(To audience.) I must get busy. (To Miss Spaulding.) By the way, Miss Spaulding, I hope you will not think I am trying to assume authority in Mr. Cashton's absence, but can you give me the correspondence on Mr. Efforton's secret process?

MISS SPAULDING—Mr. Sparr, as you know, I am private secretary here, and cannot give anyone, not even you, inside information.

SPARR—O, I, er, beg your pardon. You misunderstood me. I only thought I might be able to assist you in some manner. (Aside. Confound her. I must have those papers today.) I'm sorry indeed if I have done anything to cause you to feel that I have not the highest respect in the world for you. I think of you constantly, and sometimes I'm afraid my regard has grown into something greater than mere friendship. You seem tired and lonely here, and my greatest happiness would be to protect you from the drudgery of this office and care for you in my own home.

MISS SPAULDING—Mr. Sparr!

SPARR—Can't you believe me? I love you. I swear it.

MISS SPAULDING—(Rising). This is madness. What you ask of me is impossible and must always be so. Indeed, I am tired and lonely, but there is no remedy but work.

SPARR—Surely you do not mean—(Enter messenger boy.)

DICK—A telegram for Mr. Sparr. (Miss Spaulding takes book and hands telegram to Sparr, signing book which she returns to Dick.)

SPARR—(To Miss Sp.) Will you be kind enough to take this reply?

MISS SPAULDING—Certainly. I am here to serve you. (Gets paper.)

SPARR—Don't say that. (Dictates.) "Julius Sears." (Miss Sp. starts, but quickly composes herself.) What's the matter?

MISS SPAULDING—Nothing. I'm all right. Go ahead.

SPARR—I'm afraid you are ill, my dear.

MISS SPAULDING—Please give me the dictation, Mr. Sparr, and do not speak so endearingly to me.

SPARR—I beg pardon. I didn't think you would care if I sympathized with you.

MISS SPAULDING—I don't provided you sympathize in a proper manner.

SPARR—If I didn't love you I might.

DICK—Is there an answer to that message?

SPARR—(To Dick.) Don't get so confounded pert.

MISS SPAULDING—The boy is right. If you wish me to take the reply, please let me have it.

SPARR—(Dictating.) "Glad you are coming. Can promise you merry chase." Please send that paid. I believe I said it was to Julius Sears, didn't I?

MISS SPAULDING—Yes, you said it very plainly, and unless you find special pleasure in it please do not say it any more. (Miss Sp. hands message to boy who exits.) Mr. Sparr, you are right when you guess that I am tired and lonely. I do not feel able to work today and will ask that you permit me to go home.

SPARR—I cannot bear to see you suffer this way. Won't you come and go to a home of your own—my home—where you will be free from toil and worry? Trust me to make you happy.

MISS SPAULDING—I can never be happy again. (Weeps.)

SPARR—(Advances and attempts to place arms about her. She escapes him.) Cheer up, my dear. Can't you tell me what makes you so sad. Maybe I can help you.

MISS SPAULDING—No, I cannot tell you.

SPARR—(Aside.) It must be something bad. (To her.) I know. You just need a little excitement. This telegram is from an old college chum of mine. He is as rich as cream, and one

of the biggest sports you ever saw. He cares for nothing except breaking pretty girls' hearts (she weeps) and such things as that. He has written me that he has just met Latane Cashton at the sea-shore, and is coming here to win her.

MISS SPAULDING—(Excitedly) *What!*

SPARR—O, it will be great fun. Sears will have her round his finger before Efforton knows he is on the field.

MISS SPAULDING—(Seriously.) Mr. Sparr, please do not say more. You do not know how you grieve me. You have just asked me to be your wife and I declined. Let me tell you why. This man Julius Sears is my husband.

SPARR—*What.*

MISS SPAULDING—I speak the truth. He dazzled me with his wealth and won my poor heart, only to break it after a few short and happy weeks, leaving me to eke out an existence as best I can. And this is what he will do with Miss Cashton.

SPARR—(Aside.) Naughty boy.

MISS SPAULDING—*Did* he say he was coming here to marry Miss Cashton?

SPARR—That's what he said, and he will do it if he tries.

MISS SPAULDING—(Very seriously.) If you love me as you have just declared will you do me a favor?

SPARR—Of course I will. What is it?

MISS SPAULDING—Help me save this innocent girl from such a wreck.

SPARR—You and I against that man would be as straw in the wind.

MISS SPAULDING—Promise me that you will not assist him and I will do anything you ask.

SPARR—(Enthusiastically.) *Anything?*

MISS SPAULDING—Yes, *anything.*

SPARR—I promise. (Offers hand.)

Enter Tommy.

TOMMY—Mr. Sears wishes to see Mr. Sparr.

MISS SPAULDING—(Alarmed and hurriedly.) Please do not let him know I am here. (Exit.)

Enter Sears in good spirits and quickly.

SEARS—By jove, Robert. Glad to see you. (They shake hands.)

SPARR—It's the same old Julius of the college days. How glad I am to see you. Sit down. You travel faster than telegrams.

SEARS—Nothing like being swift, Robert. (Takes off gloves.) I changed my mind about coming, and there is a good reason for it, too. I learned that Miss Cashton would arrive tonight, and I wanted to be here to greet her. O, my boy, (Claps him on back.) she is a dandy, sweet, modest and beautiful, and I mean to make her my next Mrs. Sears. By the way, who was that skirt who left just as I entered. Up to your old tricks, eh?

SPARR—She was our private secretary. That's all.

SEARS—Private secretary might mean anyone. Who was she, I say.

SPARR—Her name is Miss Spaulding.

SEARS—(Startled.) You mean—

SPARR—Yes, Mrs. Sears—that *was*.

SEARS—(Savagely.) Will that woman haunt me always?

SPARR—(Laughing.) She ought to.

SEARS—Not on your life. She will make trouble here and I must get her out of the way. I'll pay anything to get her away.

SPARR—Not yet. I'm playing a little game of my own here and I need her myself. This fellow Efforton—

SEARS—Pardon me. I want to know, is Latane in love with him?

SPARR—Exactly so, though he is not making any racket about it.

SEARS—I see. He is my rival. I knew there was a nigger in the wood pile somewhere. She would not tell me so but a fellow cannot fail to see that she is saving the best that is in her for some fellow at home, don't-*yer*-know.

SPARR—He's the man.

SEARS—O, I'll bring her to terms, all right. Go on and tell me about this fellow.

SPARR—Well, he is a fellow here in the plant who does pretty much as he pleases. A poor boy who was taken in by Mr. Cashton a long while ago. He is a genius at chemistry and mechanics, and has perfected a wonderful process for the separation of phosphate from the crude ore, and a furnace also to use in connection with his process. Either of these is worth a big sum, and I am trying to get hold on them. Miss Spaulding handles the correspondence with the Washington attorneys, and—well, you know the rest.

SEARS—I have been reading about these inventions in the Scientific American, but I did not think they would ever interest me. However, as they belong to my rival I will join you in a scheme to rob him of them. You see, I happen to know that this girl's father is ambitious to be rich. I'm playing up to him along this line, and if you will listen to me it will be easy to rob him of his daughter and the company too. The Company and the patents I will give you for your assistance.

SPARR—Do you really mean it, old chum?

SEARS—Yep. She is cheap at the price. Now listen. I have a number of wealthy friends in the city who will join me in a gigantic scheme to organize the leading phosphate industries into a trust. They will come here tomorrow morning to discuss the matter with Mr. Cashton. He cannot fail to be impressed with the idea. They will tell him I am to be the chief promoter, you understand. Mr. Cashton is to be convinced that he is to be elected president of the consolidated companies, and get in addition five million dollars of stock. He will be kicked out in fifteen minutes after I have married his daughter, but this does not concern us now. (Laughs.)

SPARR—Yes, but this fellow Efforton. He can smash the thing.

SEARS—Now don't let that fellow bother you. Go to him and tell him about this great plan, and he will fall right in, patents and all.

SPARR—But about Miss Spaulding?

SEARS—O, that is easy. She would do anything to prevent me from marrying again. You pretend to her that with her help you can prevent my marriage to Miss Cashton. Why, she will give you the papers quick, and any other information you wish.

SPARR—Julius, you are great. I wish you luck. Miss Cashton refused me once, but I do not think she can refuse a jolly good fellow like yourself.

SEARS—Thanks for the nice compliment. I must be going now. I want to see Mrs. Cash-

ton and get her in line. She wants money and society, and will be my first lieutenant in this game. I'll see you again this evening. Remember, now. His company for you, and his daughter for me. Ha, ha, ha. (Exit, left.)

Enter Trusty, R.

SPARR—Tell Miss Spaulding I wish to see her. (Exit Trusty, R. Sits at president's desk.) Ah, when *T*m president.

Enter Sears, L.

SEARS—That's right, old man. Get accustomed to the chair. I forgot to say to you that I want you to coach the old man on the trust proposition. If he is inclined to place too much stress on the inventions just pretend they are not much after all. I'll get them sooner or later for you.

Enter Trusty, R.

TRUSTY—A gemman to see you in de outer office, Mr. Sparr. (Exit Trusty, R.)

SPARR—Excuse me just a minute. (Exit, L.)

SEARS—(Seated at desk, looking at papers and killing time.)

Enter Miss Spaulding, R. Advances towards desk, sees Sears and starts.)

SEARS—(Savagely.) What are you doing here?

MISS SPAULDING—Starts towards door as if afraid.)

SEARS—Stop! Answer me.

MISS SPAULDING—(Turning fiercely.) Julius Sears! are you not content with all the wretchedness you have caused me? Must you still come here to drive me away from the only means I have to earn my daily bread?

SEARS—(Sneeringly.) Get out of my sight. Go and stay out of my way, or I'll punish you so that you cannot earn your daily bread. Go.

MISS SPAULDING—(Staggers towards door; turns excitedly and says with feeling.) You have left but little life in my poor body, but I mean to use it to prevent you from bringing shame and dishonor to the fair name of Latane Cashton.

SEARS—(Seizing her by the throat.) You drive me mad. (She faints and tumbles at his feet.) Ha! fainted. I've seen you faint before. (Looks at her face.) You'd make a nice corpse, and you shall be, with all others who dare oppose me in this plan of mine. (*Curtain.*)

ACT II

Scene 1. Laboratory in same plant.

STAGE PROPERTIES—One counter about same as ordinary store counter, of length to suit stage. Preferably about six feet long. On counter place several glasses, and saucers for crucibles. About two dozen bottles in rows at right end. One big bottle filled with clean water at extreme right. At left end very large book behind which place trick pistol. To arrange this pistol use $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch iron rod three feet long. Securely fasten guard of pistol to one end, letting the rod stand at right angle to barrel of pistol. Bore a hole through counter and pass rod through, leaving pistol on top of desk behind book to hide it from the audience. An operator under the counter assists in handling the pistol, and with a cigar touches off the explosions as indicated in this act. Underneath counter place hot plates for making steam. Telephone and hat rack. Large envelope containing papers. Target for shooting. A small bottle of boroglycerine which can be purchased at any drug store and which is perfectly harmless. This is used with plain cook-

ing soda to make Trusty's fiz bottle. A glass containing some flour in bottom, to be used for Frank's experiments. A bottle of red solution for same.

Trusty discovered at desk looking at bottles.

TRUSTY—Afore Mr. Frank left day befo' yistidy, he axed me to be sartain to meet him here early this mawnin' to help him wid some purticular work. I wonder what he wants me ter do, anyhow, 'cause nobody been allowed in dese precincts fur a long time. De do' have been locked and nobody inside 'ceppin' Mr. Frank. Some say in de president's office dat he invented somepin'. I don't know what dat somepin' mout be, but it am creatin' unusual intrust 'bout here, sho' as you' bawn. All kinds fine lookin' spoats congregatin' 'bout Mr. Cashton an' er pattin' him on de back and talkin' 'bout milyuns. En he seem mighty tuck up wid de idea. Dis ol' head ob mine am somepin' arter de order uf er coco'nut, I know, but I don't like de way things is gwine. In de fust place dey ask me to leave de office too often, en often as I 'se er gwine I heah sumpin' 'bout Mr. Frank what eant nice. Oncet thu de key-hole in de do' I heard one uv dem fine lookin' gemen say dat he wus er gwine to marry Miss Latane ef it cost him half uv his milyuns. Now dis ole nigger knows better'n dat, cause he done been wid dat gal eber since she could cry, en ef she don't love Mr. Frank de animal instinct in me am dade. I jest wants ter live long enuf ter see her marry Mr. Frank, en ef she fails I 'se er gwine ter give Mr. Cashton my resignashum de fust day arter she fails. En den I 'se gwine ter offer my services to Mr. Frank so long's I live.

He'd jest 'swell come on heah, fur I 'se er gwine ter talk on twill he do come. No, I tired talkin'. I'll jest git into dese busticatin' things and get limbered up en on ter my job by de time he gits heah. (Goes behind counter.) I used ter see him, how he done. En ef I remembers c'rectly dis business must be carried on jest zactly perpendicular or a feller'll git his hade blowed off. (Takes up bottle and spells label slowly. S-C-H-R-U-P-D-I-L L-A-T-S-E-C-U-M-P-I-I. (Looks up at audience.) Now what do yer think er dat? Ef I had such a name I'd have the legislatur called in xtra session ter change hit. (Takes stopper out and smells, breaking into violent coughing. Tries to get stopper back.) By golly, dat stuff smells like hermonia. I won't 'sociate wid no sich trash. (Throws bottle out right. Slight explosion. Trusty flinches and looks that way.) I thought dat big name 'ud kill it. (Takes another bottle as spells.) P-H-O-S-P-H-A-T-I-C-L-A-S B-O-O-M (Pronouncing, boom). Aw don't want any er dat. Sounds like it might shoot. In dis business de main thing is ter deal wid things gentle in dey action. I done found dat out. I'll try anudder one. (Spells.) S-A-L-T-P-E-T-R-E. Aw, I knows dat won't shoot. (Pours small amount into crucible and adjusts flame. Operator concealed under counter reaches up and ignites with lighted cigar. Trusty, who has turned away to get other bottles, looks back over shoulder and sees what has happened. Gazes up at vanishing cloud of smoke then takes a squint at crucible. Another small explosion at which he jumps. He turns bottle round carefully and examines label closely, taking an occasional squint at empty crucible.) Salt Petre, I don't understand you. How do you expect me ter invent sumpin' when you will not stay in de fiah and cook? (Places bottle back on counter and takes another.) C-A-R-B-O-N-D-I-O-A-C-I-D. Don't want any dat. I wants somepin' hot as fiah, sose 'twill stay wid it. (Replaces bottle.) G-U-N-C-O-T-T-O-N (Pronounces gun *cotton* with accent on last syllable.) Don't want any er dat.

(Goes on down to end of counter close to big bottle.) Now we are gittin' into de liquids. En ef I ken fine dat bottle what Mr. Frank gits when he docters me fur grip, de liquids 'll be gittin' into us. Dat dram he gin me was de proper stuff alright, though de bottle didn't have de right name, en de stuff looked jest like water. But it sho was good. (Reads on.) T-U-R-P-E-N-T-I-N-E. Youse dangerus I know. Fraid ter monkey wid you. N-I-T-R-O-G-L-Y-C-E-R-I-N-E Dats er mighty big name, but it don't sound bad. (Goes to big book and looks it up.)

Aw yes, Hypo-Glickum. I thought I was familiar wid dat name. Dat is jest what I wants ter speriment wid. I knowed dat in all dis drug store dere wus sompin what er fellow could monkey wid widout shootin' de top er de house off. Er fellow musn't be afraid uv er thing jest cause hits got er big name. I'll put disn on ter bile until I kin make my udder selections. (Puts it in crucible and has tremendous explosion. Explosion can best be made with shotgun operated by man under counter.) Trusty has fit and recovers, running round to center. Knees smiting each other. Starts back behind counter when telephone rings. He jumps and grunts. Goes to telephone and takes down receivev very cautiously, walking as if trying to slip up on something.) Hello. Yassar. Ebrything very quiet en alright. (Hangs up receiver and bell rings. He jumps again. All this time has been holding bottle at arms' length, neck pointed from him. Looks at label.) Hypo-Glycum, you sho am ram-bunctious. Git in yo' hole. Er little er you goes er long ways. (Places bottle back on counter. Puts little red flag in it.) I'll mark you good en plain.

I think I'll devote de rest er my time lookin' fur dat bottle what Mr. Frank gits when he doctors me fur grip. (Reads on hurriedly, pronouncing very clearly.) Hypo, hydro, hilo, nitro, extractum, aqua regia distillatum. (Looks at audience.) I bet dat las' one is er gun for sho'. (Reads on, looking at big bottle.) Aleo, alco, alco, alco. (Looks at audience and smiles.) Dat don't sound jest right, but de bottle got de c'rect 'pearance, sho's yer bawn. (Backs off and squints at label.) I don't want ter make er mistake here, cause I'se gwine ter swallow some er dis stuff, en er splosion like dat las' one 'd be extra hazardous. (Shakes bottle.) O-o, jest look at de beads. I'll spell yer one mo' time. A-L-C-O-H-O-L. (Here detects scent; pulls odor to nose with hand, and breaths deep.) I'se satisfied. (Pours some in glass and drinks it, smacking lips while he pours some more.) Alcohol nuffin. You'se lickier, you is. You kin change yer name, but I knows yer smell. (Drinks some more, smacking lips.) De man what invented dat stuff ain't no blame fool. (Trick pistol rises out of desk so that audience can see it, and points to back of Trusty's head.) Well, I guess I'se made ernuf 'scoveries fur dis mawnin', en now I feel perfectly limbered up en on ter my job. I kin hold anything Mr. Frank wants helt, holded, hilden. (Turns and consults book.) Squeezed en ef necessary eat er little fish. (Here turns so as to place nose close to muzzle of pistol. Blinks eyes and gazes steadily at gun, not moving head. Opens eyes and mouth and sticks out tongue. Wig turning wrong way. Gradually raises hands and begins to tremble. Is overcome and makes strange noise sidling out towards center of stage trying to avoid gun which keeps him well covered. Finally gives up, kneeling down with hands held up.) I-I-I-I give up! Yer got me.

Enter Frank, L., turning quickly to right so as not to see T., removes hat and coat and puts on apron.)

FRANK—Good morning, Trusty. I hope I have not kept you waiting.

TRUSTY—Say, Mr. Frank. (Still holding hands up and looking at pistol.)

FRANK—Yes, Trusty, what is it?

TRUSTY—Will yer do de ole nigger er favor?

FRANK—Why of course I will. Just name it.

TRUSTY—Bail me out.

FRANK—Bail you out?

TRUSTY—Yassar.

FRANK—What have you been doing to need bail?

TRUSTY—I'se arrested. I cum down heah urly dis mawnin', so'se ter be heah when you

cum, like yer tole me. (Lets arm fall. Pistol shakes and he throws it back up, saying to gun: "Dat's alright.") En I felt awful bad en I tuck some er dat stuff in dat bottle over da. (Points towards bottle and gun shakes. He throws arm up quickly. "Dat's alright. I forgot.") En now dis blame fool gun yer got up heah jest won't fergit erbout it.

FRANK—(Turns and sees predicament of Trusty. Laughs heartily.) Trusty, the joke is on you this time.

TRUSTY—I don't mind de joke, but I suttinly don't like fer dat gun ter be on me.

FRANK—That is one of my devices for protecting my valuables in my absence.

TRUSTY—Hit duse de wuk alright.

FRANK—Yes, it is a very remarkable instrument.

TRUSTY—Hit sho' am. Do hit eber take er fool notion ter shoot? (Starts to rise. Gun shakes and he settles down.) Now did yer see dat?

FRANK—See what?

TRUSTY—Ebry time I moves hit shakes his head like er durn billy goat. Please distract de mind er dat thing ontwill I kin git behind sumpin.

FRANK—Alright, now you watch me. I am going to control it by thinking that you are a friend of mine, and by telepathy communicate to it that you took the alcohol with a perfect good will towards me, and with a full assurance that I would not care. Now when I think these things you will see the gun swing round and clear you.

TRUSTY—Go hade quick. (Gun clears and Trusty rises.) Now I don't understand dat thing. Cause dat what you thought, or mental telephed, as yer call it, is zactly what I mental telephed when I borrowed de alcohol. (Gun covers him.) Go, go, go, go, ter thinkin', Mr. Frank. Dat gun done versed hits good erpinyun uv me. (Gun clears.) As I was goin' on ter tole yer, I was feeling 'bout dat juice jest as you said you was feelin'. (Gun covers him. He jumps and grunts.) Er, Mr. Frank, fix dat thing sose twill not pint towds me no matter what I feel and think. Hit mought git mistaken and evacuate de barrel. (Frank fixes gun.) As I was tellin' you 'bout how I felt. I was feelin' nice tow'ds you, en neberdless de blame thing jest waltzed me all round over de house.

FRANK—Come. Let's get to work. I'll fix the gun so that it will only point to those who want something I have.

TRUSTY—Alright, but I'd much rather not be 'sociated wid sumpin' what knows in advance what I'se thinkin'. (Frank turns to work. Trusty takes hold of gun and makes it point towards him.) Mr. Frank.

FRANK—(Not turning.) Yes.

TRUSTY—Look heah. (Frank looks.)

FRANK—What do you want that I've got now, Trusty?

TRUSTY—Some uv dat grip medicine. (Frank pours alcohol, watching gun. Stops when gun swings clear.)

FRANK—I think the machine is out of order.

TRUSTY—No 'tain't. (Sees small amount in glass.) 'Ceptin' it ain't quite accurate in de 'mount.

FRANK—Now, Trusty, you must not bother me. I have some very important work to do, and you must be quick to assist.

TRUSTY—Alright, Mr. Frank. You goin' ter invent sumpin'?

FRANK—Trusty, can you keep a secret?

TRUSTY—Jest like er passel er women.

FRANK—I am very happy today. My patents have gone through, and it will be but a short time now until I can begin to reap the reward for my hard work. Only yesterday in Washington I was offered large sums for them. I declined them all because it is my wish to keep them here in this little company and make Mr. Cashton a very rich man. He has done a great deal for me, and I mean to pay him back with the best I have.

TRUSTY—What are you goin' ter git outen de jamboree?

FRANK—The contentment that comes to those who do their duty.

TRUSTY—Is dat all?

FRANK—That's enough.

TRUSTY—Mr. Frank, do yer keer ef de ole nigger speaks right out what he's er thinkin'?

FRANK—What are you thinking?

TRUSTY—'Bout Miss Latane.

FRANK—(Puzzled.) Er, er, you go down and build a fire in the smelting furnace. (Exit, Trusty, R.)

"Bout Miss Latane. I'm always thinking 'bout Miss Latane. She has been gone two months now, and how I would like to see her. Ever since her father took me in, a little waif no taller than that (mesaures height of small boy), her sweet face has been before me as a light in the darkness, leading me into a higher life. To repay her father, and make myself worthy of her love has been my religion. I've never been discouraged because I have confidence in her, and love her. And when I have finished the work my love for her has set me to do I shall ask her to be my partner in all life's joys and sorrows, and I know she will not deny me. (Continues laboratory work.)

Enter Trusty, leaning on operating counter.

FRANK—Did you start the fire, Trusty?

TRUSTY—Yassar.

FRANK—Here, hold this beaker. Now be careful for this is important work. (Takes glass with small amount of flour in it. Pours clear water, stirring so as to mix flour in solution.) Ah, that is perfect. (Trusty holds solution towards audience.)

TRUSTY—Butter-milk. By gosh! what you 'ventin'? Er cow?

FRANK—(Taking solution and looking at it.) Ah, that is a perfect determination. Now there is another very important test. (Hands soda pop bottle to Trusty. This bottle contains about two tablespoonsful of common cooking soda and about half full of water. Reaches for bottle with red flag in it.

TRUSTY—(Backing off from counter.) Ho, ho, ho, ho, hold on da' Mr. Frank.

FRANK—Why, what's the matter?

TRUSTY—What bottle is dat you got da'?

FRANK—Never mind. I know what I'm doing.

TRUSTY—I'd rather not hold dis bottle of yer goin' ter mix any er dat stuff wid it.

FRANK—Come on. Don't be foolish. This is harmless.

TRUSTY—Dat's what I thought uryly dis mawnin'.

FRANK—Why did you change your mind?

TRUSTY—I, I, er, er, Mr. Frank am you sho' dat am not hypo-glickum?

FRANK—I don't know what you mean, but I do know that this will not hurt you. Come here and help me or leave the room.

TRUSTY—O, I'se er gwine ter stay wid yer, but I do kinder feel shaky. (Comes up to desk cautiously.)

FRANK—Now, Trusty, hold it steady.

TRUSTY—(With trembling hand.) Ain't I holdin' it?

FRANK—Hold it still.

TRUSTY—(Shaking violently.) I'm still holding it.

FRANK—(Takes hold of neck of bottle and pours in boro-glycerine. As soon as effervescence begins Trusty slaps his palm over mouth of bottle and begins to shake bottle. Gets out in center, allowing a small stream of gas to escape. Holds bottle between knees shooting himself in face with stream.)

FRANK—(Laughing.) Hold on to her Trusty.

TRUSTY—You go to de debil.

FRANK—Bring it here. I'll hold it.

TRUSTY—You come and git it.

FRANK—(Goes and takes bottle which has quieted down.) You just didn't know how to hold it.

TRUSTY—'Twan't me couldn't hold it. Wus de bottle.

FRANK—I'm afraid you'd never make a chemist.

TRUSTY—I don't want ter make er chemist, nohow. You make 'em, en I'll sell em fur you, 15 cents er piece.

FRANK—(Laughing.) You flatter me. (Pours little of remaining contents in bottle into beaker.) Now, Trusty, there is just one more determination, and I believe the work is finished. Now this work is the most important of all and you must be prompt to assist me. (Pours little alcohol into beaker and hands it to Trusty.) Now when I call for this you hand it to me as quickly as possible. (Frank gets down behind counter and makes steam which rises in clouds above counter. Trusty drinks alcohol and tries to pour more. Has trouble with bottle.) Alright with the alcohol. (Trusty cannot pour it.) Alright with the alcohol.

Enter Latane, slipping up to counter.

FRANK—Why in the devil don't you give me the alcohol? (Latane takes bottle and pours some alcohol, passing it over the counter to Frank. He rises with a beautiful red solution at which he gazes for some 15 seconds.) That is wonderful. Simply wonderful. (Hands it over counter.) Here, hold this. And if you spill one drop of it I'll break your skull. (Latane takes beaker. Trusty gets down in front of counter laughing.) Frank makes more steam down behind counter, and rises with a beautiful green solution. Holds it up on a level with his eyes and looks at it closely, turning round slowly so as to face Latane, raising beaker above the eyes enough to look under it.) Wonderful. Wonderful! (Sees Latane. Holds beaker above his eyes and looks at her.) Isn't it?

LATANE—(Raising her glass to his. Laughing.) Here's to you. (Trusty jumps up and takes the beakers.)

TRUSTY—Here, you chil'n. You'll break dem slushums (solutions).

FRANK—Latane, is all my happiness to come to me today?

TRUSTY—She done eum.

LATANE—Are you glad to see me?

FRANK—I think I shall be when I realize that you are really here. When did you come?

LATANE—O, I arrived in time to hear that ugly word you said to Trusty. I did not know you ever let your temper get away with you that way.

FRANK—I beg your pardon a thousand times. If I had known you were going to wait on me I should have burned my hands off before asking for the glass the second time. Trusty is trying to take your place in the laboratory, and of course he can't.

TRUSTY—(Aside.) I likes dat.

LATANE—Trusty, if you do not wait on Mr. Frank just the best kind I shall take the job away from you.

TRUSTY—Well, I guess you'll get it sooner or later anyhow.

FRANK—Ahem, you, er, er, go down to the furnace and er, just go and stay down there. (Trusty goes right.) Er, fix the fire, and keep it going.

(Exit T.) I came near forgetting that blooming fire.

LATANE—Is that the way you do your assistants?

FRANK—Some of them. You see, Latane, you have been away for a long time, and when you blow in just like a ray of sunshine, I forget everything but you. My, but I had begun to feel that you would never come back. The days have been long here since you went away. Latane, do you ever think of how happy we used to be here in this old laboratory, in the offices and all round this dear old plant?

Enter Trusty.

TRUSTY—De fiah am in fine shape.

FRANK—Go and keep it that way.

TRUSTY—(Aside.) Mr. Speaker, I smell a mouse. (Exit, R.)

LATANE—Yes, Frank, never a day passes that I do not try to live over again the happy years spent here. You see, we grew up together, and—well, I just like to stay around here yet. Really, I believe I would be happier here than anywhere else in all the world.

TRUSTY—(Entering.) De furnace am jest as it wus. Is dar anything else I kin do fur yer?

FRANK—(Impatiently.) Yes, go and get into it.

TRUSTY—Alright, Mr. Frank. (Going right, stops suddenly.) Huh?

FRANK—It makes me happy to hear you say those things, because my life depends on you for all its joy and sweetness. (Advances.) You can make me—

FRANK—Did you really mean fur me ter git *into* de furnace?

FRANK—(Surprised and frowning.) Yes, go fry.

LATANE—O, Frank.

FRANK—Then you give him a job.

LATANE—Trusty, go down and cool the furnace down very slowly. Then bring it up here. If you'd rather.

TRUSTY—(To audience.) I'd ruther. (Exit, R.)

FRANK—Before your furnace gets here Latane I want to tell you of my good fortune. My inventions are completed and we have absolute control of them. When we get them installed in our little plant here you will see great improvements. Indeed, I am doubly happy today. I feel as if I may soon ask you to be—

TRUSTY—It refuses to cum. (Latane turns so as to let hand fall on trick pistol.) Lo, lo, lo, lo, lo, look out da', Miss Latane. You'se on de thinkin' machine.

LATANE—(Jumps then smiles.) What is this thing, Frank?

TRUSTY—Dat's er thinkin' machine. Very wonderful invention. It is adjudicated by de human mind in sich er way and to sich an extent, under proper conditions and favorable circumstances (Looks at Frank for approval. Frank nods), dat when what you is about ter think is mental telephed (Latane laughs) dat's jest what it is. Mental telephed. Dat's jest what it am in de curriculum (indicates large book.) Fur example, when you cum into dis office to take er drink of alcohol—(Frank laughs and leaves, Right).

FRANK—I'll be back in just a minute.

LATANE—(Picking up pistol from desk.) And so you think I come here for alcohol, do you? (Points pistol at Trusty.)

TRUSTY—Do-do-do-don't pint dat thing tow'ds me. I knows how you shoots 'em. En I knows yer didn't cum heah fur alcohol, too. He-he-he.

LATANE—(Placing pistol on counter.) O, you are the same old Trusty. Your hair is a bit whiter, and your shoulders a little more stooped; but your heart has not changed. I know you are happy here with Frank. Anybody would be. He's such a noble fellow. For a long time I was here with him almost constantly. My childhood was spent here at work with him. I've grown up learning to depend on him for happiness, until today when I feel with a woman's heart that I love him best of all in all the world.

(Frank is heard outside.)

TRUSTY—Dar he cum now. Tell him jest what you jest tole me.

LATANE—O, dear no. I must be going. Keep my secret, Trusty. I've had a big time. (Exit, L.)

TRUSTY—(Bowing low.) Goodby, Miss Latane. (To audience.) Why don't dey tell each udder dere troubles? Somebody goin' ter keep foolin' roun' heah ontwill it is too late. Dis is a kind of business what kiant wait.

Enter Frank, L.

FRANK—Trusty, where is Miss Latane?

TRUSTY—She's gone.

FRANK—It makes a big difference when she goes, doesn't it?

TRUSTY—Look heah, Mr. Frank, lemme tell you somepin'. You done gone clean blind. (Pistol points to him.) See dat?

FRANK—(Sets out bottle.) Just help yourself.

TRUSTY—All er dis?

FRANK—Yes, all of it; but I advise broken doses.

TRUSTY—Well, I'll jest make de fust break wid er haf er glass.

FRANK—Trusty, how much of that stuff can you drink?

TRUSTY—Pends on de quality. What am dat in dat fofe bottle up dar.

FRANK—Why, that's salt petre. From that you make gun powder.

TRUSTY—(To audience.) I told you so. (To Frank.) What am dat in dat bottle fudder down. No, not dat un. Dat un.

FRANK—That is nitroglycerine, the most powerful explosive known to chemistry. Don't ever monkey with that.

TRUSTY—You needn't worry.

FRANK—(Picking up disc from counter.) What is this trash?

TRUSTY—Dat? Dat ain't no trash. Dat's er invention er mine. It has ter do wid, en

relates to de human voice. Wid dat thing swallowed down yo thote you can sing like er quartette.

FRANK—(Laughing.) Can you demonstrate?

TRUSTY—Wid ease. (Swallows disc with great difficulty. Quartette, all but Trusty, concealed behind scenes, sings familiar plantation song. Latane enters and listens to end. She and Frank applaud.)

LATANE—That was fine. (To Frank.) I've got to go now. (Offers hand. Frank's hands are soiled. He hesitates.)

FRANK—My hands are soiled. (She takes one and holds it firmly.)

LATANE—That's alright. I've had a happy visit.

FRANK—And we've been happy to have you. Come oftener. You will always find a welcome wherever I am.

LATANE—(Going.) I know it. Goodby. Goodby, Trusty.

TRUSTY—Goodby, sweet chile. Mr. Frank ain't she sweet en dandy?

FRANK—(Looking after her.) Aw, shut up. Come, we had better start over again.

Enter Sparr.

SPARR—(Talking at door.) May I come in?

FRANK—Certainly. I'm glad to see you.

SPARR—I didn't know. You have been shut up in here so long with your inventions.

FRANK—(Laughing.) Well, I'm glad the storm is over, and again my doors are wide open.

SPARR—Then I guess you are ready to talk business.

FRANK—I'll do the best I can. What is it?

SPARR—I came to get your idea of this new plan to form a trust. I suppose you have heard about it.

FRANK—No, I have not. What trust?

SPARR—Why, the phosphate trust. Hasn't Mr. Cashton told you about it?

FRANK—No, I haven't seen him since my return. Is he in his office?

SPARR—Yes, but he is engaged with some capitalists. They are discussing the matter now and he is in for it. And I'm sure you will be too.

FRANK—Who is behind this matter?

SPARR—Why, Mr. Sears, but he doesn't want Mr. Cashton to know it until tomorrow. You know, Mr. Sears, don't you?

FRANK—Julius Sears? Yes, I have heard of him. A rich promotor, I believe.

SPARR—(Encouraged.) Exactly so. He is the man behind the movement, but, as I told you he doesn't want it known until tomorrow. There are special reasons for this. A big deal like this one must be carried on in the quiet, you know. What do you think of the plan?

FRANK—You have told me nothing of the details of this plan, and before I can tell you what I think it will be necessary for you to give me more information.

SPARR—Sure. Well, Mr. Sears has arranged with eight of the leading phosphate companies to enter a gigantic trust, and offers Mr. Cashton *ground floor space*, provided he will enter his company and these patents of yours.

FRANK—Ground floor space. What does that mean?

SPARR—I mean he is to get \$5,000,000.00 of stock and the presidency of the consolidated companies. Don't that sound nice for the old gentleman?

FRANK—(Ironically.) Yes, very nice. Just like a dream.

SPARR—Then you like the plan?

FRANK—As a dream I like it very much indeed. What do the other companies get?

SPARR—O, that has not been decided.

FRANK—(Emphatically.) What does Mr. Sears get?

SPARR. He gets a commission. (Winks at audience.)

FRANK—Is Mr. Cashton's stock treasury stock, or is it common?

SPARR—I suppose so.

FRANK—Don't you know?

SPARR—Mr. Sears will look after that.

FRANK—What assurance has Mr. Cashton that the directors of the new trust will elect him president?

SPARR—Mr. Sears said so.

FRANK—Where are the head offices of this trust to be?

SPARR—I don't know. Mr. Sears is going to look after that.

FRANK—Sparr (laughs.) You don't think I'm going to be deceived in this way do you? You are up in the air badly. Now get this rot out of your head. I'm not going to urge Mr. Cashton to take any such step.

SPARR—You ought to be willing to do all you can after he has done so much for you.

FRANK—Stop right there. You need not remind me of my obligations. I will look after them myself. Besides, you are wasting my time. Mr. Cashton is president of this company. See him.

SPARR—O, very well. (Exit, L.)

TRUSTY—What am dat fellow talking about?

FRANK—He doesn't know.

Enter Mr. Cashton, L.

MR. CASHTON—Good morning, Frank. Glad to see you back. (Shake hands.)

FRANK—Good morning Mr. Cashton. I meant to come to your office to speak to you, but Sparr told me you were engaged on a very important matter.

MR. CASHTON—(Shewing pleasure.) You bet I was. My office has been full of the wealthiest men in the city, talking money. My boy, I am going to be one of the rich men of our city. I hope you had good luck in Washington.

FRANK—Yes, sir; I'm glad to inform you I did. My patents have all gone through (producing large envelope) and here are the letters patent. (Gives them.) I mean to give you the full benefit of them.

MR. CASHTON—Why, Frank, these are worth a fortune to you my boy. And you give them to me?

FRANK—Yes, sir; cheerfully. I can never repay you for what you have done for me.

MR. CASHTON—Tut, tut, my boy; you owe me no gratitude. You repaid me long ago. I'll put these patents in the trust we are forming, and pay you a royalty on every ton of phosphate we mine. That will pay you for your kindness to me. By the way, what do you think of this trust proposition?

FRANK—I know absolutely nothing of the plans you speak of. Sparr came in and tried to tell me something, but he did not know heads or tails. I concluded the whole matter was nothing more than one of his air-castles.

MR. CASHTON—Air castles, nothing! It's a fact. I'm to be president of the new \$25,000,000.00 corporation, with \$5,000,000.00 of the stock all clean velvet. The thing is already settled. O, I'm rich at last! Now what do you think?

FRANK—Mr. Cashton, I'm happy to see you so hopeful, and confident, but I'm afraid this proposition is not solid. Neither you nor Sparr can give a substantial reason why it should be. I feel that it is my duty to advise you to go slow and sift this thing to rock bottom, and be certain you are not plunging beyond your depth.

MR. CASHTON—The men behind this thing are the strongest in the city, and they assure me there is no doubt as to the final outcome. There is another famous capitalist and expert promoter at the head of the thing, but for special reasons his name is being kept a secret until the thing is in shape for him. Now what do you think?

FRANK—(Smiling.) I think you are just like Sparr. Full of a vague idea of millions, and that is all. If you are determined to go into this matter as you have said I withdraw my offer of the patents. However, nothing could make me happier than to give them to you for your own personal profit. But I'm afraid to chunk them into this flimsy scheme. I tell you, Mr. Cashton, with the advantages these processes will give us, we can soon be rich, and it will be honorable. Now if you will get all this tommy-rot about millions out of your dear old head we'll get down to business and make things happen. Won't you take my advice?

MR. CASHTON—O, you are afraid of such big game, that is all. Everything is coming out right. Just wait and meet some of these gentlemen. They will convince you. Withhold your final decision until this afternoon when we are to have another meeting. You must be present and hear what they have to say. I'm sure you will think better of the plan. (Going.) I'm depending on you to stick to me.

FRANK—I'll be present, though I do not think my decision will change. So if you are depending on me I advise you to make your position clear.

MR. CASHTON—O, you'll come over alright. Be prompt. (Exit.)

TRUSTY—I'd give five dollars if I cud talk to dat old man like you do.

FRANK—Trusty, things are going to smash here and you and I had better try to save our heads.

TRUSTY—Mr. Frank, what's goin' ter happen?

FRANK—No one can say. I seem to scent serious trouble, but I cannot say what it is. It is lunch time. Close the furnace doors. (Trusty pours some alcohol into bottle.) I say, Trusty, the alcohol bill for this company has been enormous for the past month.

TRUSTY—Do you think Miss Latane will come back this afternoon?

FRANK—(Going to coat rack.) I said the alcohol bill had been enormous for the past month.

TRUSTY—(Seated on stool before counter, glass in hand.) We don't keer, do we?
(CURTAIN.)

ACT II

Scene 2. Same as Scene in Act 1. Same day.

TRUSTY—(With dust pan and broom.) I never seed things mix up so fas' in my bawn days. Ebrybody got a scheme. Somebody goin' ter git hurt. En it all cum 'bout in jest er day. Fum what I kin see ebrybody fur he-self en de debbl fur de hindmost.

Enter Miss Spaulding. L.

MISS SPAULDING—Has Mr. Efforton come in yet?

TRUSTY—He haven't reported to me yet, but I'll go down en see ef he cum.

MISS SPAULDING—Let me know as soon as he comes. I must see him at once.

TRUSTY—Yassam. (Exit, R.)

MISS SPAULDING—I can at least be a friend to him. And if he will listen to me it will save many a heartache.

Enter, Sparr, L.

SPARR—Hello, my dear. I hope you feel more kindly towards me today.

MISS SPAULDING—Mr. Sparr, you cannot be a friend to me and Julius Sears at the same time. So please regard my feelings by treating me with more respect.

SPARR—There now, you do me a great injustice. You must know I (Attempts to place arm about her shoulders.)

MISS SPAULDING—Stop! If you have not the natural inclination to respect me I shall attempt to teach you.

SPARR—(Sneers.) And what would you do?

MISS SPAULDING—If I were a man I would break every bone in your miserable body; but as I am only a helpless woman I can do no more than tell you you are contemptible.

SPARR—You are not very complimentary today. Have you forgotten your promise regarding Sears' marriage. You said you'd give me those papers if I would not assist him.

MISS SPAULDING—I was mad when I promised that. Mr. Efforton has confided in me, and I mean to keep the trust.

SPARR—Look here, Miss Spaulding; you cannot afford to take this position. I'll give you ten thousand dollars if you will turn over those papers to me today, and promise me that you will leave here and do nothing to prevent Mr. Sears' marriage.

MISS SPAULDING—You wretched tool in the hands of Julius Sears! I can see his black soul in all you say. I know it too well. I'm penniless and alone, and I have suffered much at his hands, but through it all, thank heaven, I have remained true and pure. If your bribe were ten thousand times ten thousand dollars I'd say NO! (Points to door.) Now go. (She keeps pose as Sparr exits, L. She sinks into chair and weeps.)

Enter Frank, R.

FRANK—Did you send for me, Miss Spaulding? (Sees her weeping and rushes to her.) What's the matter?

MISS SPAULDING—Mr. Efforton, I want to talk to you as a sister to a brother. May I?

FRANK—I do not deserve such confidence, but if I can be your friend, you have but to let me know how.

MISS SPAULDING—It is not that. I ask no favors. Rather I would favor you. You may think strange of what I'm going to say, nevertheless I mean to be your true friend.

FRANK—For heaven's sake, Miss Spaulding, what does this mean?

MISS SPAULDING—A heinous plot is being laid to destroy your happiness, and not only yours, but that of another who is dearer to you than life itself.

FRANK—Miss Spaulding, are you ill? Surely these things cannot be. Go on.

MISS SPAULDING—All this talk about forming a trust is nothing less than a grand scheme of Julius Sears to marry the girl who loves you.

FRANK—*Impossible.*

MISS SPAULDING—No, believe me; I speak the truth. I felt that it was my duty to tell you and I beg you not to think unkindly of me for doing it.

FRANK—Ah, I see the whole scheme clearly. Heaven forbid that I should doubt your sincerity. I appreciate your loyalty more than I can express. And, since you have proven yourself my friend, I'm going to accept you as such and tell you that you need not feel any anxiety as to Miss Cashton. Sears may be able to turn the world over but he cannot separate me from that faithful girl. She's not engaged to me, nor has she ever told me in words that she would be true always, but in far sweeter ways she has told me much more. She has been my idol since I was eight years old, and the days that have passed since then, without exception, have given me a better right to feel that she is true to me. She seems a part of my life. The very blood that flows in my veins is richer and better because it knows her as a partner in my heart. She is grappled to me with hooks of steel which have been forged in my hot ambition to win for her, and tempered with her own lovely appreciation. O, I tell you, my friend, I may doubt all others, but rather

than feel afraid of her in any crisis, I'd lay me down and die. Sears will steal the company, but Latane's heart is far beyond his dirty reach.

MISS SPAULDING—Please don't take any chances. (Sparr is heard out L.) There comes the Superintendent. Do not let him find you here. I'll explain later. (Exit Frank, R.)

Enter, Sparr, L.

SPARR—I feel that I should apologize for the insult I offered you a few minutes ago.

MISS SPAULDING—(Rising.) Your presence is the greatest insult you can offer me. (Exit, R.)

SPARR—Looking after her and smiling.) The she-devil.

Enter Sears, L.

SEARS—Hello. Do I look like a man in love?

SPARR—Not a bit.

SEARS—Then I look like I feel. By the way (laughs) where is your secretary? And how are you getting along with her?

SPARR—Not doing much. Have had a couple of bouts with her already this morning, and lost both of them. See that scratch? (Pretends to have scratched cheek.) She did it.

SEARS—(Laughing.) O, come. You lack nerve. You will enjoy the game better after you are well into it. There is nothing so splendid as this game of human hearts. (Sneers.) Fill your pockets with widows' and orphans' money, buy big head-lines in the papers—as I did this morning—go about making love to beautiful fresh rosebuds of girls, playing up some get-rich-quick scheme to their gold-greedy fathers and step-mothers, marrying only those you like best; then, when tired of them, divorce and turn them loose on society, grasswidows to nurse their sorrows always.

SPARR—You heartless cur!

SEARS—O, you take life too seriously. Come, tell me the developments. Do you think this old man is going to take the plunge? The game is in fine shape now, and we must make a master stroke. My men tell me that the old man is crazy over the thought of getting rich. And his poor wife is now spending my money. What have you succeeded in doing?

SPARR—Well, this scratch is about as far as I have gone. I went to Efforton, but I forgot my speech. He asked me more questions than an encyclopaedia could answer, and all I could say was, "Mr. Sears said so." He will not enter, you can put that down in your little booky book. Now what are we going to do about his patents. I must have them.

SEARS—That will be easy. My detectives tell me that this fellow has been offered the presidency of the Upland Phosphate Co., down at Philadelphia. Now this company is worth having. I mean to buy controlling stock in that company, and when the patents have been sewed up with them I shall yote him out. Yes, I'll put you in. Now you go ahead and play the old man up on the trust. Pretend that the patents are not valuable anyway.

SPARR—I'll do as you say and depend on you to take care of me.

SEARS—You shan't be disappointed. I need your help. I'm willing to pay for it. Go in with all your might. I have just seen Miss Cashton—and got refused again. Yes, I did. My millions mean no more to her than the sands of the sea. Now this is going to be the game of my life. I shall win it at any cost. Human happiness, even human lives, shall be taken if they interfere too much. But you ought to see her old step-mother. She is to be my strongest ally. Poor old soul, she would go to hell for gold and society. O, I tell you she will pull us all through.

SPARR—(Offers check.) Here is the bribe. Miss Spaulding refused it with a very pretty speech.

SEARS—You keep it for your trouble.

SPARR—Thanks, old chap.

SEARS—Don't mention it. Just keep a cool head and coach Mr. Cashton on the trust. The girl is cheap at any price. I believe she will accept me tonight, but if she fails I mean to ruin her father and reduce them all to poverty. Then I shall appeal to her along the line of parental duty. She loves the old man so much she would not hesitate to marry me if by that means she could protect him from suffering and want. The old woman says she can hold Efforton off while I play my game.

(Latane is heard outside, L.)

LATANE—(Outside door.) Wait just a minute, dear. I have a message for daddy.

SEARS—There she comes now. Scoot. I want to give her some smooth talk. (Exit Sparr. Sears sits at desk examining papers.)

Enter Latane, L.

LATANE—Daddy, mother wants you to come home early tonight.

SEARS—(Raising his face.) Bless her dear old heart. (Latane is surprised.)

LATANE—O, I beg your pardon.

SEARS—That's alright. I'm glad you made the mistake. Else I might not have had the nice invite. (Rises.) Latane, since I left you this forenoon I have felt lonely and impatient to see your sweet face again. The hours have dragged by as if they were crippled, and everything seems wrong. (Advances ardently.) I cannot live without you. My wealth and my poor lonely heart I lay at your feet. Won't you accept them? You love me. I know it. I will make you the most popular woman in the land. Your dear father and mother will be happy and rich. This one hope is my life. Take it away and I do not care to live. I am here now to make your father the richest man in the city. It would be so nice if I could ask him for your hand. Won't you take this breaking heart of mine in your dear hands and keep it as your own always? My darling, my queen. (Attempts to embrace her. She escapes him.)

LATANE—(Turns facing him, looking him full in the eyes.) Mr. Sears I am deeply grateful to you for any kindness you may feel disposed to do for my dear father, and I appreciate the honor of your proposal. But I must beg more time to consider. To marry you would mean a great deal to me. I cannot do so until I'm certain that I love you better than anyone else.

SEARS—I do not want to burden you with my pleading, but I would rather beg of you than be a king. Tonight when I come you will make me happy, won't you dear?

LATANE—Yes. I will give you an answer tonight. Please deliver my message to daddy. Goodby. (Exit, L.)

Enter Sparr, R.

SEARS—How did you like that spiel I gave her?

SPARR—I liked her reply better. I advise you to get out of here and stay with her. She will be down in that laboratory with Efforton, and you will be out of her mind entirely. Besides, Mr. Cashton is expected in a few minutes.

SEARS—Good idea. I'll go and stand guard over her. (Exit, L.)

Enter Mr. Cashton, R.

Mr. Cashton—I thought I heard voices.

SPARR—I was just humming a little ditty. How do you feel after your excitement yesterday? Isn't it great how these fellows do things?

Mr. CASHTON—It certainly is. Already I feel just like one of the boys. I have always felt that I could turn a trick like this, and I am very happy. Only Frank will not go into the trust with me. What do you think is the matter with him?

SPARR—O, he just wants to plug along in the old rut. That's all. You ignore him altogether. He'll will you dirty if he gets a chance.

MR. CASHTON—I must resent what you say about that boy. He is honor to the core, and it is time you were finding it out.

SPARR—I beg your pardon if I have offended you. You see I was only trying to discount every possible obstacle that might prevent the successful issue of this trust.

MR. CASHTON—Well, that is not the way to do it. He may not go in, but I know he is honest in his convictions.

SPARR—You misunderstand me. I am looking to your interest first of all. I feel that you are going to succeed, and as your employee I feel that it is my duty to do anything to aid you.

MR. CASHTON—I appreciate the interest you are taking, and assure you that we shall have no trouble from that source. Send him to me at once.

SPARR—(Going.) Yes, sir. I hope he can be convinced of the merits of the proposition. Such opportunities as this one do not come often. They should be seized firmly.

MR. CASHTON—It really seems too good to be true. But others have done it and why cannot I? I've always wanted to make a fortune for Latane, and if I succeed I shall be very happy.

Enter Frank, R.

FRANK—Did you send for me Mr. Cashton?

MR. CASHTON—Yes, sit down. I want to talk to you about this trust.

FRANK—It is useless. I have gone into the matter very carefully and cannot for the life of me see anything but failure for you.

MR. CASHTON—O, you are just afraid of it. You always want to be too safe. This is a golden opportunity.

FRANK—I am very sorry to go against your opinion, but under the circumstances I cannot do otherwise. And again I beg you to stay out.

MR. CASHTON—Would you have me forego this chance to get rich—

FRANK—Pardon me for interrupting you. There is no use arguing the matter further. I see your determination to take stock in what seems to me to be a gigantic fraud. There is nothing left for me to do but give you my resignation.

MR. CASHTON—(Surprised.) Frank, you don't mean it!

FRANK—I certainly do. If you think my patents will be valuable to you I shall gladly assign them over. I shall always be happy to see you succeeding.

MR. CASHTON—This is too much. I do not want you to give me what has cost you so many days of hard patient toil and study. So I decline them.

FRANK—I appreciate your consideration, as well as ten thousand other kindnesses which I can never forget.

MR. CASHTON—You have made me what I am and owe me nothing. When our corporation is organized I shall want you to accept a position with me.

FRANK—I do not know just what my plans will be, but I cannot promise to accept a position with you.

MR. CASHTON—Why not?

FRANK—I have told you I do not approve the methods by which this trust is being formed.

MR. CASHTON—My boy, your ambition to win has made you blind. I'm going down to lunch. Won't you go with me?

FRANK—No, thank you. I shall finish some work here and write a formal resignation for your records.

MR. CASHTON—I do not like to hear you say that. See if you can't change your mind. (Exit, L.)

FRANK—(Seated at desk.) It has come at last. A man spends his life in an honest purpose, and then finds it useless. I have always labored to be of service to this man. Now when

it is possible he refuses it. And yet all this comes at a time when I can get out in the world and make a home for Lataue.

"Honor wins. It must be so.
Tho' days be long, and nights be dark
'Twixt days that come and go.
Still honor wins. Its average is sure;
He gains the prize who can the most endure;
Who faces issues, who never shirks;
Who works and watches, and who always works."

That shall be my text.

Enter Sparr, L.

SPARR—Aha. Sitting at the head desk today, eh?

FRANK—Only long enough to write my resignation.

SPARR—What! I didn't think you had nerve enough to stick to your old benefactor.

FRANK—(Rising quickly.) Mr. Sparr, this is not so much a matter of *nerve* as it is a matter of *honor*. You know yourself that the proposition on which you have won Mr. Cashton is not solid. I have chosen to resign rather than go into the steal. But I want you to understand that I am going to stay in touch with the game and save Mr. Cashton whenever I can.

SPARR—I fancy you would not be so kind to the old gentleman if he were not the father of Lataue.

FRANK—That's going a little too far. I'm in a very poor mood to consider your insults.

SPARR—I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to insult you.

FRANK—(Savagely.) You ignorant coward. To offer me an insult and then immediately apologize for it in order to save your head well becomes your infamous character. I have seen your hand in this scheme from its inception. You'd sell your soul for money. Take this from me. I'm going to stick to Mr. Cashton through thick and thin, if he will let me, and you will not find it an easy matter to ruin him. As for his daughter I shall not disgrace her name by mentioning it in your presence. (Quick curtain.)

ACT III

Scene 1. Library in home of Philip Cashton. Same evening. Doors right and left. Writing desk, and other furniture suitable.

LATANE—(Seated at desk, head bowed on arms.)

MRS. CASHTON—(Entering hurriedly, paper in hand.) O, just look here, my little millionairess (Pointing to paper.) The newspapers are full of nice compliments for the man who has asked you to be his wife. Don't be sad. If such a nice man had just proposed to me I'd be up and singing, instead of grieving as if you didn't have a friend in the world. Why, I really believe I am happier than you are.

LATANE—(Looking up.) I hope you are; for I am miserable.

MRS. CASHTON—(Laying hand on shoulder.) Come, come, my dear. Cheer up, and be equal to your good fortune. You will be happy after you are married. And it will be such a nice surprise for your dear old father. You know he will be pleased to see you married to a multi-millionaire. You owe it to us all to accept Mr. Sears as soon as he gives you another chance. Don't fool along with him as you would with some ordinary man. He might withdraw his offer. You will never have another chance as good.

LATANE—You speak of marriage as if it were a matter of dollars. And I am inclined to believe you would have me marry this man just to make us rich. You seem to forget that I met

Mr. Sears only a few days ago, and that I hardly know him yet. I regard marriage as a very serious matter, and have looked forward to it all my life; but when I take this step I want to feel that it is with a man I truly love better than all others. This way I do not feel towards Mr. Sears. (Rises. I beg that you do not urge the matter on me any further. (Exit, L.)

MRS. CASHTON—The unfeeling upstart! She thinks she can bring my plans to nothing, and I'll show her that she cannot. After all my scheming to get into high society with her! I'm determined that she shall marry *Julius Sears*. I wish I had her chances. I'd accept him so quick it would disgust him. This Frank Efforton is in my way. I must get him out. If Philip would join me I could close the matter in short order. I have an idea that I can convince him. (Mr. CASHTON is heard out, right.) There he is now. (Advances to door, right; paper in hand, and talking excitedly.)

Enter Mr. C.

MRS. CASHTON—O, Philip, I'm just dying to see you. I have such good news! Look there. Look! look! look! (Thrusts paper in his face.) Read it and then you can appreciate what I have to tell you.

MR. CASHTON—(Pushing her aside.) *Phew!* For heaven's sake, Elizabeth! Have you got delirium tremens? If the news you have is good in proportion to your excitement I prefer that you wait until I have had a bite of supper. I am tired and my head is awlirl. (Mrs. CASHTON shows displeasure.) Come here, my dear. Don't be offended. I have news too. I am a real, live rich man.

MRS. CASHTON—O, I know. Let me tell.

MR. CASHTON—Don't interrupt me, please. If you are going to do all the talking I shall surely go to sleep.

MRS. CASHTON—(Acridly.) Thanks.

MR. CASHTON—You may talk in just a minute. I really want to hear what you have to say.

MRS. CASHTON—(Brightening.) I knew you did. It's so good and fits right in with your happy mood. It was this afternoon when he asked her to—

MR. CASHTON—Did you say supper is ready?

MRS. CASHTON—O please let me tell it.

MR. CASHTON—No, swing onto it, my dear. If you get started there will be no supper. Besides, my news is the most important and should be told first.

MRS. CASHTON—Do hurry and tell me.

MR. CASHTON—Well, to begin with, Frank's patents have gone through.

MRS. CASHTON—I do not care to hear about them.

MR. CASHTON—But you must. They form the basis of the great plan to organize the phosphate trust of which I am to be president. He has spent his life in that dingy old laboratory working out this wonderful secret, by which the cost of production is reduced one-half. And, now when his fortune is secure he offers them to me without a penny in return.

MRS. CASHTON—What else can he do? Isn't he your employee, and haven't you kept his soul and body together all these years?

MR. CASHTON—And you must not forget that he has helped to keep our souls and bodies together. Besides, he has built my company up to where it is paying a handsome income, and many times doubled in value.

MRS. CASHTON—Philip, you are making the mistake of your life. You seem to think this Efforton fellow is everything. You are bragging on him too much before Latane. Already she regards him as her ideal. You know you would not want your daughter to marry such a slave to his work. Especially when Mr. Sears wants to marry her.

MR. CASHTON—(Surprised.) What do you mean? *Mr. Sears*? Who is he? Latane thinking of marrying?

MRS. CASHTON—Now don't get excited. I will tell you something if you will let me.

MR. CASHTON—I don't understand you. But we will come back to that later. There must be some mistake. You are jumping on poor Frank as if he had done something awful. The idea that he has ever thought of marrying my daughter is absurd; for, as you say, he is a perfect slave to his work, and thinks of nothing but making our company the biggest in the country.

MRS. CASHTON—You are blind, Philip.

MR. CASHTON—O, they are friends of the best sort, to be sure, but I think you should not feel any anxiety as to this honest faithful fellow. What if he should marry Latane. She could do worse.

MRS. CASHTON—Ugh! I had rather see her dead.

MR. CASHTON—You are too hard on Frank. And as for Latane, I feel sure that she can be trusted to make her own decisions. After all the happy woman is she who marries the man she loves, who loves her, and lives for her alone. But we will not discuss these matters until I have told you about my good luck. Following Frank's offer came Sparr, and a host of gentlemen in silk hats—

MRS. CASHTON—Now you must let me tell that. I—

MR. CASHTON—I insist that you let me finish. Sparr is our new superintendent, and a wonderful schemer. He introduced these men and they began to talk of millions right off the reel. They told me all about a big plan to organize a phosphate trust. And what do you think? They said I had been selected as the head of the consolidated companies. I am to get \$5,000,000.00 of stock, and a salary that staggers me. They explained that they were acting for a celebrated promoter who would come out later and close the deal. They did not give me his name. Said it was better to get things in shape first.

MRS. CASHTON—I know more about this than you do, so let me finish.

MR. CASHTON—If you interrupt me another time I shall leave you and go to bed. The only thing I do not like about it all is that Frank will not go into the thing. He has resigned rather than enter the trust. I hardly know how I can do business without him.

MRS. CASHTON—(Waits short space.) Now are you ready to let me tell you the straight of this affair?

MR. CASHTON—Yes, Elizabeth, for if you don't talk you will bust.

MRS. CASHTON—I see you don't know the cause for all this good fortune. In the first place I am the one to be thanked for all that has happened today. If there had been no pesky secret inventions, smoky laboratories and such abominable stuff the happenings of today would have been the same. I cannot for the life of me see why you insist on giving Frank credit for everything that happens in your office.

MR. CASHTON—Because he makes them happen.

MRS. CASHTON—Now I have the floor. You champion him on every turn, and yet you confess that he refuses to aid you in a plan that means wealth and happiness for us all. For my part I want no better evidence that he is either trying to ruin you, or marry your daughter, which is the same thing. Now listen to me.

MR. CASHTON—Go on.

MRS. CASHTON—I'm going to give you some real live news. Don't be surprised. *Julius Sears* is the man who is to come out and make the final contracts for this trust. He is the genius of whom you spoke. He is simply wonderful. He has preferred to keep in the background, because he is afraid you might not understand his motive. A few days ago he met Latane down at the seashore and fell desperately in love with her. (Mr. Cashton starts.) O, you needn't be sur-

prised. This afternoon he asked her to marry him. He said that he could not place you at the head of this trust until she was engaged to him. Said you might feel that he was trying to buy your daughter.

MR. CASHTON—That is the way a gentleman would look at such a matter.

MRS. CASHTON—Indeed it is. He is a thorough gentleman. And Latane refused him as if she had a dozen millionaires to select from. The silly goose. It is all because of this Frank Efforton. I know it is. You had better get rid of this fellow anyway, or you will regret not having done so. Just think of *any* girl refusing to marry a man like Mr. Sears. Old aristocratic family, high social standing, a score of millions, and everything like that. Why, every girl in the city wants to marry him, and would jump at the chance. It is simply disgusting for her to keep the dear man in suspense. It is your plain duty to tell her so.

MR. CASHTON—I don't understand.

MRS. CASHTON—You will when I have finished. Look here. (Points to paper.) Big head lines, "Mr. Sears, the wizard of the financial world,"—and goes on to mention many large deals he has handled with millions of profit for his clients. Now, don't you think it is wise to have your son-in-law take charge of your business, and make you a rich man. Only this afternoon he came to me after Latane had refused him, and almost wept when he told me of his plan to go down to your office and ask for her hand, and then tell you of his great plan he has been laying for your happiness. Do be sensible, Philip, and don't let your sentiment get the best of you. Surely you feel his masterful hand in the happenings of today. As for these little things of Frank's, why, they just happened to come up simultaneously with these important matters. That's all.

MR. CASHTON—It does seem that he has been very kind. I have followed your argument very closely and am forced to agree with you. He is the man to handle this matter. I will follow his advice. As for the love affair I wash my hands of that and turn it over to you. I have implicit faith in your good judgment, and have had ever since you accepted my own offer of marriage.

MRS. CASHTON—(Merrily.) O, that was a small matter.

MR. CASHTON—Indeed.

MRS. CASHTON—Let us not get off the subject. What I want you to do is get this fellow Efforton out of the business. Let him go, if he wants to. Mr. Sears says he is a very poor business man anyway. If he stays in he will spoil everything. Let him go. Make him go at any price.

MR. CASHTON—Do you think Latane loves Mr. Sears?

MRS. CASHTON—O, I'm sure she does. And as for Frank, well, she just has an old friendly feeling for him. Anyway, you said you would turn this part of the business over to me.

MR. CASHTON—And so I will. I will have nothing to do with it. As to Frank I will consult Mr. Sears about him. Sparr has expressed a desire to get him out. But I tell you, Elizabeth, I hate to go back on a fellow who has done so much for me.

Enter Latane.

LATANE—Daddy, you seem worried. Has anything gone wrong at the office?

MRS. CASHTON—No, Latane. I have just been telling him about Mr. Sears' proposal, and naturally it makes him sad.

LATANE—Daddy—(appealingly.)

MRS. CASHTON—(Interrupting.) We have been expecting this for some time, and he had hoped you would not refuse him. You'll be glad to learn that Mr. Sears is going to take charge of your father's business, and put it into a big trust, giving us \$5,000,000.00, and making your father president of the whole thing. Already \$10,000,000.00 is subscribed and—

MR. CASHTON—Frank's inventions.

MRS. CASHTON—Mr. Sears says are not at all important.

MR. CASHTON—The entire subscription is based on—

MRS. CASHTON—Mr. Sears' ability in such matters. Ah, my dear, you will be proud of such a husband. Few girls can be as happy as you ought to be.

LATANE—You say daddy is rich. What has made his company worth so much more in a single day?

MR. CASHTON—We have some new inventions, and—

MRS. CASHTON—Mr. Sears says a trust can be formed. Why don't you see—but you need not bother your dear little head with such matters. Your husband will look after them for you.

LATANE—(Seriously and speaking slowly, stroking Mr. C.'s hair.) Daddy, I don't want to marry and leave you. I've been so happy all my life. We used to be together in the office where I've watched our little company grow up to be a big one. I love it, and it seems to me that it would be sacrilege to turn it over to strangers' hands. Let's keep it, you and me, and—Frank.

MRS. CASHTON—And be paupers always. (Exit Mr. C., L., drying eyes.) You see, your father has too much sense to listen to your argument. (Playing up.) When you are mistress of the Sears millions you will laugh at the little phosphate company. (Laughs.) Come, my dear; you know you want to be the richest woman in the city.

LATANE—Not at the price of happiness. I do not love and trust Mr. Sears. He lacks those qualities that appeal to me, and without which he could never command my best love. It is my faith that every girl should plant her affection in something solid so that it will grow better and stronger under the common needs of every-day life. I tell you once for all, measured by this high standard, Mr. Sears is not the man I could love as I must love my husband, be he pauper or prince.

MRS. CASHTON—O, that is the way all girls feel. The deepest and only true love comes after marriage. Take my word for that dear. Latane, it would break your father's heart if you refuse to marry this man. His happiness is in your hands. Now will you show your love or will you see him ruined. This trust has gone too far for anything to save it if you refuse Mr. Sears. I speak plainly that you may know the truth.

Enter Mr. Cashton, L.

MR. CASHTON—I have just had a message that Mr. Sears is on his way down here. He says he wants to see me on a matter of business, but I fancy he wants to see someone else, eh Latane? (Exit, L.)

MRS. CASHTON—The dear fellow. Now, my dear, you will have another opportunity to make us all happy. Stop and think how much depends on your answer. (Latane weeps quietly.) Cheer up, you have great cause to rejoice. I hear a carriage at the door now. I shall leave you alone. It will be so much better. (Exit, L.)

LATANE—(During these lines orchestra play very softly "Dearie." Latane seated in C., looking down.) This is when a girl needs a mother. A real, loving, sympathetic mother. Blood of her blood. One whose heart is warm and tender and true. She says Daddy wants me to marry this man, and that if I do not he will be penniless. How can I marry him when my heart and all that I am belong to another who has merited them?

Indeed, I have reached a point in life where the way does not seem clear. I love my father and Frank so tenderly and truly that for me to fail either is more than I dare contemplate. And yet I must cleave to one and forsake the other. (Lifting her eyes pleadingly.) Mother in heaven which shall it be? You gave me this heart of mine. Now direct it. Show me the way, and I will follow it, wherever it leads me. I seem to hear you say, "Frank," and so it shall be. (Goes to desk.) Mr. Sears shall have his answer. (Writes, reading aloud.) "I love another. If you ever

truly loved, you will understand. LATANE." I'll leave that here where he will find it. When he reads it he will pity rather than blame me. He will not suffer, for he does not love that way.

(Brightening.) And now when Frank has won his place in the world, and asks me to be his, O, happy thought. (Door opens. She stands with back to it. Enter Frank, who looks at her a short time.)

FRANK—Am I not welcome, Latane?

LATANE—(Whirling round quickly, extending both hands.) Yes, Frank; a thousand times. I was just thinking about you.

FRANK—I can never deserve that nice compliment, but each day brings me closer to it. But you seem sad. What is the matter. Has someone mussed up your doll house? Come, tell me all about it.

LATANE—Don't speak that way, Frank. I can't tell you what I would like to.

(Enter Mrs. CASHTON. Expecting to greet Mr. Sears. Seeing Frank, changes her expression.)

MRS. CASHTON—(Cordially.) I knew you would be the first to congratulate her. (Frank starts.) Latane, Mr. Sears is in the parlor. How dare you keep him waiting?

LATANE—I did not know he had come. I will go to him.

MRS. CASHTON—Mr. Efforton will excuse you, I know. (Exit Mrs. Cashton.)

FRANK—Do not let me stand between you and happiness, Latane. I do not wish to do that.

LATANE—O, Frank, tell me what to do?

FRANK—I'm afraid I'd be a partial counselor, but as I have always tried to do what you ask me, I say to you, as I would to all girls who want to be happy: Keep your heart right and follow it wherever it leads you.

LATANE—(Looks at him seriously.) I will. (Exit, L.)

FRANK—If it were not for my confidence in that girl I'd be miserable.

FRANK—(Enter Mr. CASHTON, L.) I beg your pardon for calling at this hour, Mr. Cashton, but I felt that it was my duty to come and beg you not to go further with this trust until you can see clearly the outcome of it.

MR. CASHTON—Frank, Frank, Frank—(Laughing.)

FRANK—I know you cannot believe the truth. I come to tell you again the thing is a fake. Already some of the subscriptions have been withdrawn. You are on dangerous ground. Believe me. There is time left for you to save yourself. I took pains to insert in the articles of agreement which you asked me to draft, certain clauses which make your acceptance contingent on a matter that is entirely in my control.

MR. CASHTON—Frank, I have always found you safe and sane, and I have great confidence in your ability. But in this instance I disagree with you.

FRANK—On what grounds?

MR. CASHTON—You do not seem to grasp the full meaning of this great opportunity.

FRANK—I hope you are right, but I fear the results. This telegram is from the Upland Phosphate Company offering me the presidency of that company and 5,000 shares of treasury stock, provided I will join them with my inventions. I mention this only to show you that we can succeed with our company just as it is. It would please me very much to decline this splendid offer and stay with you.

MR. CASHTON—Frank, go ahead and accept that offer. I'm not afraid to stick to the trust.

FRANK—Unless you accept my offer and withdraw from this trust before midnight tonight you will be penniless.

MR. CASHTON—(Laughs.) Why Frank you are mad. You are not in condition to talk business. Run along home and get a good night's sleep.

FRANK—Mr. Cashton! are you so blind? Won't you listen to me?

MR. CASHTON—Don't urge me further. I'm determined.

FRANK—Then I have done all I can. Here is my address. If you need me, let me know.

MRS. CASHTON—(Entering.) You are wanted at the telephone, Philip.

MR. CASHTON—That is a call from up town, and I will be there sometime. Good-night.

FRANK—Good-night, sir. (Exit Mr. Cashton.)

MRS. CASHTON—I'm sorry to see you leave, Mr. Efforton, but it is necessary that he get a man in your place who has a better knowledge of high finance. Mr. Sears is a wonderful man and is going to take hold now and do what you have failed to do for Mr. Cashton. I know you are glad to see Latane loved and admired by such a man. Can you keep a secret?

FRANK—I don't like to.

MRS. CASHTON—O yes you do. Now listen. She has promised to marry Mr. Sears. (Frank starts but quickly recovers. Latane is heard off left singing "Dearie.") Just listen how she sings when it is to the man she loves. * * * Wouldn't you like to be rich? (Exit.)

FRANK—(Listens through song, leaning on back of chair.) Impossible to believe. O, it cannot be. My song! The little song she used to sing to me, and which she said was mine. After all my honest effort to aid her father, and just when I could do something worth while he chooses to withdraw from me and plunge with this gang of thieves. All because his greed for gold has strangled his honor. This is hard enough, but to be compelled to sit and listen while Latane sings with such unmistakable depth of feeling for another the little song that has cheered my benighted heart so long, is not what I deserve. If I had listened to Miss Spaulding. I'm alone now, and empty-hearted must be all my efforts. (Starts to door.) I must go away from here, for I'm in the enemies' country, without a friend. (Exit.)

Enter Mrs. Cashton.

MRS. CASHTON—(Looking about.) I thought he would see that he is not wanted here. Now it is easy sailing. (Advances to desk.) I'll write him a letter to stay away. (Starts.) What is this? (Reads.) "I love another. If you ever truly loved you'll understand. LATANE." Ha-ha. And this was her answer to Mr. Sears. I know it was. The designing wretch. I'll see if she can spoil my plans in this manner. Mr. Efforton shall have this letter. I'll mail it to him myself. (Looking in desk.) If only I could find an envelope addressed in her hand. And it will be no trouble; for there are scores of them. (Seals letter.) I'll turn the tables on the little Miss, this time. When Frank gets that he will accept it as final and interfere no further.

Enter Sears.

SEARS—Ah, here you are.

MRS. CASHTON—Have you come to ask my permission to marry her?

SEARS—I thought I had that all the time. No, she has refused me again and sent me away.

MRS. CASHTON—You must not lose heart. She just wants to tease you. Game that is hardest to catch is sweetest you know. She is playing for time to see what this fellow Efforton is going to do. I have about gotten him out of the way, and am playing my highest trump on him now. This letter I found on her desk. It reads, "I love another," and such stuff as that, you know. It was written for you, but I have found an envelope in her handwriting and am mailing the sweet little thing to him. It has no name so he will accept it as from her. O you men are so stupid.

SEARS—I could take you and steal the United States Treasury.

MRS. CASHTON—There is one other thing to be done. You go to your stationers and have

announcements printed for me tonight. Also have the morning papers print the glad tidings. Say the marriage is to be any time you wish. Latane, under all this pressure, cannot do anything but fall in line. She just needs a little encouragement.

SEARS—I may need your cunning to get me out of jail, but I am willing to take a few risks in order to get you for my mother-in-law. (To audience.) Bah!

MRS. CASHTON—(Pouring wine.) Here, we will drink the health of the *next Mrs. Sears*.

Enter Frank, hurriedly.

FRANK—(Excitedly.) Pardon me for rushing in, but I must see Mr. Cashton at once.

MRS. CASHTON—(Coolly.) Mr. Cashton is not in.

FRANK—Will you be kind enough to tell me where I can reach him by phone?

MRS. CASHTON—No. I know nothing about him. (Offers glass.) Here, we are drinking the health of the next Mrs. Sears. Won't you join us?

FRANK—Yes, but not with wine. (Picking up water bottle.) My mother taught me never to associate good women with anything that is bad. So I choose the pure crystal nectar that springs from the mountain side unrestrained—water. Because it is a more fitting emblem of the purity and chastity of Latane, and because it better represents her real necessity to the happiness of man. (Sears sneers.) You miserable cur. If you had come out and fought in the open, instead of skulking about in the night with such poor old ignorant women as this one, you would not now be able to laugh at me. The subterfuges and hellish schemes you have employed will come back to you and demand their reward. And yet (Raises glass.) even though every drop in that glass represent a tear distilled from the anguish of my heart, if Latane's happiness is in it I do not ask that the cup shall pass. I drink it to the bitter dregs. I hope you will be good to her. (Drinks. Latane enters, L., as curtain falls.)

ACT III

Scene 2. Same as Act 2. Next day.

Enter Sears and Sparr, laughing.

SPARR—Let me congratulate you. I have just seen the announcement of your engagement to Miss Cashton in the morning papers.

SEARS—Announcement the devil. That was just a scheme of the old woman's to make her say yes. But it failed miserably. She is determined not to marry me. Now I say she shall. Within thirty minutes the old man will learn that he is a bankrupt. I am going to give her just one more chance to save her father, you understand, and if she fails I am going to reduce them to absolute poverty as I told you. This fellow Efforton is causing all the trouble. He leaves today for Philadelphia where he little expects to meet me again. Ha-ha. He little dreams that I have an option on controlling stock in that Upland Company, and that I am going to wait until they have secured his patents and then kick him out, thus reducing him to poverty along with the others. This, you see, will make his marriage impossible if he should learn that she is true to him. Today he thinks he has been jilted good and strong, and, poor fellow, he is grieving most distressingly. Ha-ha-ha-ha. Poor fool. I hate to do it. O, he is easy.

SPARR—You had better kill him. He will probably come here to see the old place again. I can get him into a difficulty. You stab him and swear I did it in self-defense. There will be no witnesses. Don't you see?

SEARS—Bah jove, Robert, you are a better friend than I thought. It is desperate, but I will do it.

SPARR—Sh-h. I hear him coming. Scoot. (Exit Sears and Sparr, L.)

Enter Frank, followed by Trusty carrying two suit cases.

TRUSTY—Mr. Frank, yer ain't goin' ter leave us, is yer?

FRANK—Yes, Trusty, I have come to this old laboratory to get my last morning welcome. You see I was raised in this room and could not think of going away without returning to see it once more.

TRUSTY—You say you is gwine ter leave. Is you takin' Miss Latane wid yer?

FRANK—No, Trusty.

TRUSTY—Yes yer is. I'se er runnin' dis business.

FRANK—Miss Latane is going to marry Mr. Sears.

TRUSTY—De debil she am.

FRANK—You have been a faithful friend, Trusty. Won't you stay with me as long as you live?

TRUSTY—Yassar. Thank yer, Mr. Frank. Jest wait twill I kin go and gin Mr. Cashton my reignashum. (Going.) I'll go wid yer anywhar, ebry time. (Exit.)

FRANK—Trusty sticks when all others fail.

Enter Miss Spaulding.

MISS SPAULDING—(Excitedly.) O, Mr. Efforton, have you seen the morning papers, and have you heard that Mr. Cashton has lost everything?

FRANK—Yes, Miss Spaulding. I know all. His company will not need your services any longer. I wish to express my appreciation of your friendship by offering you a position as my private secretary. If you care to accept it, you may report at the president's office of the Upland Phosphate Company in Philadelphia tomorrow morning at nine o'clock. You will find me there at the head of that company.

MISS SPAULDING—Thank you a thousand times. I am so glad you have saved yourself out of this wreck.

FRANK—I have fallen far short of saving myself, Miss Spaulding, but I mean to fight on as if it had not happened.

MISS SPAULDING—It is good of you to offer me employment which I accept with a heart full of gratitude. I will report for duty tomorrow at nine. Goodby. (Exit.)

Enter Trusty.

TRUSTY—Two letters fur yer, Mr. Frank. Dey cum to de president's office, en Mr. Sparr said dey was important. (Lays them on table.) I'se er gwine ter stay wid yer.

FRANK—I'm glad of that. Take these suit cases to the Pennsylvania station and wait for me there. I'll be on presently.

TRUSTY—You'll find me da wid de grips. (Hands paper.) Mr. Sparr said give you dis paper, so'se yer could read about Miss Latane's marriage announcement. (Exit, L.)

FRANK—Marriage announcement! Then it's true. But yesterday I lived in the security of her love, and could not believe her faithless. And now, with one fell sweep this licentious hawk has descended into my happy dream, clutched his vicious talons deep in the tender heart of this little bird of mine, and is now flying away to his gilded castle to devour her. And so it has always been with me. When I would reach out my hand and lay hold on happiness it has moved just a little further on. Like a child chasing a rainbow I've found at last, and at a great price indeed, that life, for me, is empty after all. (Picks up letters.) Letters. Yes, here is the announcement. This is how they punish me. (Opens letter and reads) "Mr. and Mrs. Philip P. Cashton, announce the *engagement*." ENGAGEMENT. Then they are not married. There is time enough yet. I'll fly to her and declare my love. I know she will not deny me. (Starts. Stops.) ENGAGEMENT. She has promised, and I regard a woman's promise to marry second only to the marriage vow itself. The man who seeks to alienate her affections is less worthy of them. Unless I know her heart is as free as the birds that tipple in the air I can never say, "I love you." (Sees

Latane's letter. Picks it up.) It is from Latane. (Tearing it open.) Little girl, forgive me for doubting you. I ought to have known you could not be false. (Opens and reads.) "I love another. If ever you truly loved, you'll understand. LATANE." (Crushes letter in his hand.) Latane has said it, and that is final. She won't care to hear from me, but I'll write "Good-by" and leave it here where I learned to love her. (Writes and reads.) "Good-by, Latane." (Bow head on letter for few seconds. Looks about walls of room.) Dear old lab! The time has come when I must leave you. Always through my life I shall look back to this spot of earth with a tender feeling akin to filial love. Your four walls have been my little world. You have seen the struggle, and know what great happiness has come to me here when her sweet face made your dingy walls glow with the warmth and sweetness of her love and sympathy. You have given shelter to many a sweet day-dream of success and life in a home where she—(Haltingly advances toward counter.) Dear old bottles! I know every one of you by the touch. You are my only friends left. Won't you comfort me with some deadly drug that will let my soul float away out yonder somewhere, free from this disappointment? You will at least bring oblivion. (Pours poison.) I'll drink deep and here where it was begun end the life I hate so fervently. (Starts to lips with glass.) What! A vision! Between me and that glass I see my dear old mother's face. She is standing with hand uplifted, saying, "My son, don't." Beside her stands Latane, saying, "Frank, don't." The one is dead, and the other has forsaken me, but once these two good women controlled my every thought and purpose. And so it shall be always. (Smashes glass against floor.) I'll be a man. Over this broken cup I resolve to live so that when I am dead no man can say of me, "He debauched the life his mother gave him, and which he gave to Latane."

Enter Sparr, followed secretly by Sears.

SPARR—Did you get the paper I sent you?

FRANK—Robert Sparr! If it were not for having such blood on my hands I'd kill you where you stand.

SPARR—Now that might not be so easy as you think. You must not be angry with me because you have found your sweetheart an ordinary flirt.

FRANK—(Advancing savagely.) YOU CUR! (Strikes him down, and whirls drawing revolver on Sears who advances on him with drawn dagger.) Stop, you blood-thirsty coward. I do not want to kill you.

Enter Latane.

LATANE—(Raising arm.) Gentlemen! (Frank lowers gun and removes hat.) What does this mean?

SEARS—He insulted you, and I—

FRANK—You lie. (Draws gun on him. Latane springs in front of Sears as if to take shot. Frank drops gun. (QUICK CURTAIN).)

ACT IV

Scene, Upland Phosphate Offices next day.

Stage properties same as those in other office scenes.

TRUSTY—(Stubs toe at door, stumbling and throwing suit cases out in C.) Ho-ho-ho-ho! Hold on dar you lambasted suit cases. I never seed you in sich a hurry to git anywhar in my bawn days. (Rubs shins.) De fust thing I'se er gwine ter have dun heah is to have dat doah tuck up en lowered 'bout two inches. By Gosh! I neber rid so fas' in my bawn days. Dat train jes' fell down fum New Yawk jes' like er tree fallin'. I bet I don't git all de cinders outen my wool fur three weeks. Well, I wunder what Mr. Frank is. Ef I thought dar wus er laboratory round heah anywhar I'd ramble down dat way and see ef I couldn't start some alcohol. Dis futlize busi-

ness sho' have been rocky fur de last day or so, en I'm hopin' it'll settle down a bit. (Telephone rings.) He jumps and grunts. Grins at audience. I bet dat's Mr. Frank now. (Goes round and sits at desk.) I suttinly is er important *pussonage*. (Clears throat.) Hello. * * * * Trusty Hopkins. * * * I said I'se Trusty Hopkins, de 'vance agent er Mr. Frank. Whut kin I do fer you. * * * Tell him you'll be down in er minit? Yassam. (Hangs up receiver.) Dat sounded jes' like Miss Spaulding.

(Cocks feet up on corner of desk.) Dis is de way I rid in dat train las' nite. (Door opens. Frank enters and Trusty slides out of chair as before, coming round to front.) Er-er-er, 'scuse me, boss. I am de 'vance agent er Mr. Frank, en en enterin' I noticed dat yo' desk wus not zactly tidied up. I hopes you will 'scuse de liberty. (Continues to rub desk head bowed.)

FRANK—(At door, laughing.) That'll be alright, Trusty.

TRUSTY—(Looking up. Stands up and squints eye at Frank.) Well I be durn. What 'du want ter skeer me like dat fur? I thought you wus de big bug er dis concern.

FRANK—And so I am, Trusty. This fifteen acre plant you see here is under my control. I was elected president yesterday.

TRUSTY—Yer talks like yer mean it. I en you can jes' make de futlize fly. Won't we boost 'er?

FRANK—That we can. You can be my confidential office man, and I give you absolute control of all newsboys, officeboys and messenger boys, to do with them as you please.

TRUSTY—(Feeling muscles.) Now yer gittin' down ter business. I'se been bullied by pestiferous office boys, en newsboys, en messengerboys, ontwill I am gray, and it gins me de greatest pleasure to contemplate de 'stermination er dem all. When do my license go inter defect?

FRANK—Not foi a few weeks yet. I have accepted this position with the understanding that I am to have a three months' leave of absence. I mean to take you across the big blue pond and travel in foreign lands where I hope to forget everything.

TRUSTY—(Sympathetically.) Yes, I know, Mr. Frank.

Enter Mr. Gilbert.

MR. GILBERT—(Cordially.) I'm sorry if I have kept you waiting, Mr. Efforton. Glad to see you, and hope you are well and happy this morning.

FRANK—Good morning, Mr. Gilbert. I am well, thank you, and with the honor your company has placed on me, I should be very happy.

MR. GILBERT—The honor belongs to the company, sir. We are fortunate to have you as its head. You will today receive 5,000 shares of our treasury stock which we give you in lieu of your new, inventions. If you wish to sell this stock we have an offer of 286 for it.

FRANK—I think I shall keep it.

MR. GILBERT—It represents the balance of power in our directorate, and in the hands of a speculator might cause trouble.

FRANK—I see.

MR. GILBERT—You may be glad to know that provision was made for a three months' leave of absence, as you requested, so you may suit yourself about taking charge now or later.

FRANK—I am glad to know this. I left my other work very tired and exhausted, and need rest.

MR. GILBERT—Would you like to go through the departments? I'm sure our men wish to see their new president.

FRANK—Yes, thank you. I want to meet as many of them as possible.

MR. GILBERT—(To Trusty, who has been standing idly by.) Did you wish to see me?

TRUSTY—(Jumps and grunts.) No-no-no, Saw. I'se jest waitin' fur Mr. Frank.

FRANK—He is my man, Mr. Gilbert. I could not keep house without him.

TRUSTY—(Bowing low.) And very much at yo' service, sah. (Exit Frank and Gilbert laughing.)

TRUSTY—Whilst dey is rummagin' roun' wid de departments I'll jes' be president *pro tem*-perance. (Sits in president's chair.) When I gits ter be president I'se er gwine ter be short en ter de pint. For illustrashum: When dat man cum in heah he orter said, "Hi, Mr. Frank. You'se elected. Duse yer want ter go ter wuk?" Den let Mr. Frank say, "No, I wants to take Trusty ter Urup." Den let dat udder fellow say, "Alright, let's go en let de departments look at us." Dat's all dey said. Instead ob dat big bug cum in heah and fosed all dat flap-doodle on Mr. Frank when I knows he did not feel like talkin'. (Gets up and pulls up coat sleeve, feeling of muscle.) I wisht dat newsboy what axed me why I didn't kink my hail would cum long bout now sose I cud use de prerogatives er my high office er bit. (Newsboy is heard outside crying papers.) "Morning papers. Paper mister?" (Trusty squares himself and shows good action. Pretends striking imaginary object. Newsboy, outside: "Morning papers. All about de big down-town fire." Enters office on last word. Trusty takes him by ear, turning him round facing door. Pushes him forward and give swift kick, landing him outside. Crash outside.) I bet dat boy kiant sit down good en flat fur three weeks. (Enter messengerboy, hurriedly. Walks up behind Trusty.)

MESSENGER BOY—Did you ring Western Union?

TRUSTY—(Winks at audience.) Uh-uh. (Makes swing at him but misses. Boy escapes, L) I didn't take good aim on dat un. Mr. Frank talkin' bout goin' to Urup. I cud fergit all de troubles I eber had right here scrappin' wid dese boys. (Enter office boy, L., standing at door watching Trusty, who is walking stage from him.) Trouble like pleasures never cum singly. De nex' boy what sticks hisse'f in heah 'll git a jar fur his granmudders' jelly. (Turns so as to see Office Boy. Looks him squarely in the face, eyes bleared. Advances to him cautiously, fists clinched. Strikes at him, boy ducks dodging blow. Trusty's fist sticks through paper door. He extracts it as if pulling it from wall. Chases boy who picks up chair.)

OFFICE BOY—Here, you hyena. What's the matter with you? Stop, or I'll break your cocoonut.

TRUSTY—Hy-hy-hy-ena? (Starts for him.)

OFFICE BOY—Stop. Who are you?

TRUSTY—I'se de flippity muck er de new president, dat's who.

OFFICE BOY—The new president? Has he come?

TRUSTY—Yes, he have cum. En I cum wid 'im.

OFFICE BOY—(Friendly.) Where is he?

Enter News boy and Messenger boy with clubs.

NEWSBOY—Where is that nigger?

OFFICE BOY—Sh! The new president is here.

MESSENGER BOY—(Pointing to Trusty.) Is that it?

OFFICE BOY—No, but he is his man.

TRUSTY—(Bowing low.) En ver' much at yo' service, sah. (Telephone rings. Office boy starts to answer. Trusty catches him by arm.) Jes' you ho-ho-ho-hold on dar. I'll ten' tu dat. (Takes down receiver.) Dat you, Mr. Frank? * * * Alright, sah. (Hangs up receiver.) Mr. Frank say fur me to hold things down until he cum. Dat means dat I'se president er dis shebang. (Sits at desk.)

OFFICE BOY—(Struts up to him extending hand.) Awfully sorry if I have kept you waiting.

TRUSTY—Aw, cut dat flap-doodle out. Say what you mean en I'll understand you.

MESSENGER BOY—Where is your private secretary? I suppose you have one.

TRUSTY—"Zactly so, but she am late dis mawnin'. Won't you take her place?"

MESSENGER BOY—With pleasure. (Takes seat at desk.)

TRUSTY—Now you be de secretary uv my private seetatum.

OFFICE BOY—Certainly, sir.

TRUSTY—(To newsboy.) Now you am de flunkey. Yo name am Trusty Hopkins, en when I speaks dere had better be sumpin' doin'.

MESSENGER BOY—(To Office boy.) Now I'm a girl and I do not want you to forget that you are one too.

OFFICE BOY—Alright, Dickie Dear. You can trust me.

TRUSTY—Trusty Hopkins, you go out en scour de frunt doah steps.

NEWSBOY—Dey wus scourd afo' you cum down.

TRUSTY—Den you go down to de laboratory and build a fiah in de furnace. (Boy starts right.) Ho-ho-ho-hold on da'. You might git inter dat alcohol bottle. You jes' stand close en wait fur orders. (Struts back to desk.) Anything important in this mawnin' mail, Miss Clarissa?

MESSENGER BOY—Yes, sir. A very important telegram, sir.

TRUSTY—(Hands in pocket.) Read it to me.

MESSENGER BOY—(Reading.) Will take 25 cars fertilizer same as last, provided you will not hold me responsible for a bad crop. Signed.....(Here insert local fertilizer dealer, or leave out.)

TRUSTY—Take dis answer. (Local dealer's name.) "Youse got ernuff futlize." Signed, Hopkins." Rush dat out en send cullek.

MESSENGER BOY—Another telegram, to the president.

TRUSTY—Let's have it.

MESSENGER BOY—(Reading.) Will pay you 286 for stock. Hold off election until I come. Signed, Julius Sears."

TRUSTY—(Bristling.) Write dis reply plain as yer kin. "We'se holdin', don't yer worry. Come on en we'll put you in a futlize sack whar yer belong." I hopes I'se president when he gits heah. Heah take dese letters. (To Office Boy.) Give me dat ratin' on dis furn, please. (Boy takes papers and looks in big book. Dictates.) Rufus Shonts, I regrets to say I kian't. Very truly yours. (To Secretary) Dar is nuffin' like bein' brief en to de pint. Trusty Hopkins, you go down to de gen'l manager's office and say I wants to see him. Break de same news to all departments en dey heads. Say it is important. Am I dictatin too fas' fur you, Miss Clarissa?

MESSENGER BOY—I think I stand the pace.

TRUSTY—"Ephraim Isaiah Hopkins"—(To audience.) Dat is er brudder er mine, en er sister to sis. "Yo' speetable epistle ob de twenty fofe before me and at dis time receivin' my best considerationments and dictationments."

MESSENGER BOY—Dictationments?

TRUSTY—Yes, dictationments. Don't corrupt me. "Replyin' I wants ter say I am heah wid pencil in hand ter let yer heah fum me, en find out dat we is up, me an' my fam'ly, 'eptin' de ole woman got de mumps wid de chil'n, and I got de rumatiz. De doctor say we gwine ter hav smallpox onless wese scratched wid vaseline. Sunday we had chicken"—Trusty Hopkins, you go look at de sun en tell me what time it am. Whar did I leave off?

MESSENGER BOY—Chicken.

TRUSTY—Well, dat's er good place ter stop. Dat'll be all on dis cylinder. (Telephone rings.) Answer dat.

MESENKER BOY—Hello. Trusty Hopkins & Company. * * * Just a minute. (Hands receiver to Trusty.) The president wishes to speak to you.

TRUSTY—Dat you, Mr. Frank? Alright suh. (Hangs up receiver.) Scoot out er heah. Scoot! Scoot! (Boys hurry out, L.)

TRUSTY—Da's er big diffunce in bein' bossed en bossin'. Fur illustrashum: dar is two classes er men in dis great country ob ours. One class is bein' bcsed, en de nudder is bossin'. In udder words de married en de unmarried men we have wid us terday. All men am bawn free en equal. Mr. Lincum said so in dat hyfolutin' manipulation he wrote long bout appermattox. Bawn free en equal. What do dat mean? It mus' mean sumpin' else, 'cause I knows no man is equal ter his mudder-in-law. I'se bawn befo' de war, en therefore a slave always. En when Mr. Linkum said I'se er free nigger I jumped up en hollered 'bout oncet. Den Martha caught me by de nake en said I reggin' not. I can't dade yit. Poor old Martha. I miss havin' her ter boss me en tell me what ter do. When she was heah dar was a bright spot in ebry day. We used ter sit in de doah in de ebening en watch de day play long on de western sky, en across de cotton fields we could heah de niggers singin'. (Here Trusty's head is bowed en hands while quartette sings sentimental plantation song. At conclusion Trusty raises head.) O, Marfa: duse yer eber take yer eyes off'n de streets er shinin' gold en pearl en silver, en look down on urth in dis lonely old heart ob mine, so lonely since de chariot come an' got yer? (Quartette sings refrain of song.)

Enter Sears, L.

SEARS—I want to see Mr. Gilbert at once.

TRUSTY—Yer wants ter see de president, don't yer?

SEARS—Exactly so. Tell him I'm in a great hurry. Just say Mr. Sears wants to see him, and he will come running. (Pitches a coin to Trusty who takes aim and pitches it back, saying to audience: "Somebody else better be runnin'." Exit, R.)

SEARS—(Swinging cane.) I tell you it takes ability to handle a game like this one. I am just in time to stop the election and puncture Mr. Efforton's air-castle. I'm glad I didn't kill him. I'd rather down him by superior brain power.

Enter Miss Spaulding. Seeing Sears stops and turns to go.)

SEARS—Aha! Ruth Spaulding! I see. You are running after this fellow Efforton, thinking he will take care of you. I want to tell you that before the sun sets today he will not be able to buy you a loaf of stale bread. (Enter Frank, R., stopping at door at Sears' back.) This company will be under my control, and I assure you I do not want any such as you and he round here. You'd better go now, or I'll (Starts at her viciously. Frank catches him firmly by shoulder and turns him round.)

FRANK—What does this mean? (They look at each other a moment.) Julius Sears, you are in my office, and in the presence of a lady. (Points to Sears' hat. Holds pose. Neither flinches.) Take it off. (Sears slowly removes hat.) Now speak to me. What do you want here?

SEARS—I want to see the president of this company if you have no objections.

FRANK—I am he. (Sears is surprised.)

SEARS—There must be some mistake.

FRANK—There is a mistake, and you have made it. This company does not need your infamous cunning. I'm in control here, and have the pleasure to inform you that your presence is not desired. Furthermore, I want to say to you that Miss Spaulding is a lady. If I ever hear of you treating her in any other way, or interfering with her happiness in any way I shall shoot you as I would a vicious dog. (Points to door.) There is the door. Use it.

SEARS—(Laughs contemptuously and starts to put hat on. Frank stops him.)

FRANK—Not yet. You will please remain uncovered until you are outside my offices.

SEARS—(Lightly.) O very well. (Going.) There will be another day. (Exit.)

FRANK—I beg your pardon, Miss Spaulding, for such conduct in your presence. That man drives me beyond my self-control. I'm glad you have come, and hope you will be happy here. I do not take charge for three months yet. Here is your salary for that time. (Gives check.) You need a vacation too, and I hope it will be a pleasant one.

MISS SPAULDING—Mr. Efferton, your kindness and sympathy overwhelm me. How can I ever repay you?

FRANK—Simply by believing I am your friend.

MISS SPAULDING—I could not doubt that. (Offers hand.) Goodby. My best wishes go with you always.

FRANK—Thank you. Goodby for awhile. (Miss Sp. goes, L., meeting Trusty at door.)

TRUSTY—Well, befo' de lawd. Ef it ain't Miss Spauldin'.

MISS SPAULDING—You here too, Trusty? It seems just like old times. (Exit.)

TRUSTY—Mr. Frank, now ef we jes' had Miss Latane heah!

FRANK—I forbid you ever to mention her name again. It hurts. Go to my room and finish packing the trunks. We leave this afternoon. (Exit Trusty, L.) The poor old negro's sympathy is about all I've got in the world. He knows my heart is crushed and would strengthen me if he could. With all my success I am far from happy today. It is void of the solid comfort I had thought it would hold. The days will be long and tedious. And what of the lonely nights that follow them! Will I ever sleep without dreaming of her? If I dream of her will I go mad when I awake and find it all a bitter lie? (Curtain.)

ACT V

Scene—Poverty-stricken home of Philip Cashton three months later.

Stage Properties—Invalid chair for Mr. Cashton. Table in center back with revolver on it. Piano at left center. Photograph on piano. Other furniture very cheap.

MR. CASHTON—(Discovered sitting in chair propped up with pillows. Lights low. Enter Latane, hat as from street.)

LATANE—Poor old daddy. He got tired waiting for me to come from my work and fell asleep. (Removes hat.)

MR. CASHTON—No, I'm not asleep my child. (Holds out hand which she takes, laying other hand on his head.) I have been sitting here by my lonely fire thinking how good and faithful you have been to me, and how much I have caused you to suffer.

LATANE—(Cheerfully.) There, there, now daddy. You must not talk that way. This little home with you in it is a happy place for me. I'm not complaining.

MR. CASHTON—That is what hurts me so. When I look back over my life and see the part you have played in it I cannot but feel that I have been ungrateful to you. When you were but three days old your darling mother died and left me with no one to love but you. In a few years Frank was left an orphan and I took him. We were poor and life was not all sun-shine. (Latane weeps.) He was ever like a faithful son to me until I became greedy for gold and spurned his honest hand.

LATANE—(Sadly.) Daddy, let's not talk of those days. They are gone now. (She strokes his hair gently.) You couldn't help it. You did the best you could. I've got you yet and we can be happy here alone. (She sits at his feet.)

MR. CASHTON—(Laying hand on her head.) My child, if I had not stood between you and happiness I could die with a better assurance of heaven. The doctor told me today I could not live long. I want to hear you say you forgive me for trying to put another man in Frank's place. If you should ever see him again say for me, I loved him next to you. (Latane remains

with head bowed a short time, then raises her face to his.) Daddy, when you are gone who will I have left? I love Frank with all my soul, and sometime, somewhere love will find its way. You are tired and sleepy. Let me tuck you away in bed and sing you to sleep with the little song I used to sing when I was a little girl. (Exit Mr. Cashton, supported by Latane.)

Enter Sears.

SEARS—(Swinging cane and looking about room.) Now it would seem to me that I have reduced them low enough. To me this poverty is unthinkable, and I cannot understand how anyone could prefer it to my millions. Tonight I must win or lose; for Frank Efforton, damn him, has learned the truth and is at this minute crossing the ocean as fast as steam can bring him. If I do not succeed in getting her tonight the game will be lost. I wish that old woman had not deserted them when the ship went down. I need her advice. (Looks about room.) I wonder why she has not come home. I'll return later tonight when she is singing to cheer her lonely heart and make one more appeal to her to save her father. It may be that she has forgotten this Efforton fellow and is willing to marry me in order to save her father from suffering and want. And if she refuses I'll show her that Julius Sears never loses. She shall go with me tonight if not willingly then otherwise. (Exit, L.)

Enter Latane, R.

LATANE—(Crosses to piano, plays and sings, "Daddy." When she has finished she picks up Frank's photograph from piano and places it closer to her.) Before I sing your song, Frank, I want to tell you something. Ever since that day long ago, when you and I were working in the dear old laboratory, and I was hurt by the explosion—don't you remember it; it seems to me but yesterday—they thought I was killed. Daddy said, "Run for the doctor, Frank. She is dying." You darted to the door, then came back and placed your lips close to my ear, whispering, "I love you," and kissed me. I was but a little girl then and you but a boy, yet your words sank deep into my heart and started a flame that has burned brighter each day, until tonight when it is consuming me. (Takes picture in hand.) Fate has separated you from me, but I love you still. You thought I loved another and was too good and true to interfere. All my efforts to tell you better were thwarted by designers on our happiness. I know if I could but speak to you all would be well. You seem closer to me tonight than ever before, but if I never see you again I promise your reward shall be my undivided love and loyalty always.

Enter Sears.

SEARS—I hope I do not intrude, Miss Cashton.

LATANE—(Startled.) Mr. Sears!! Why do you come here? Is it possible that you enjoy seeing the suffering and unhappiness your heartlessness has caused me?

SEARS—You do me a great injustice, Latane, to lay at my door the unavoidable occurrence in your father's business. I did all I could to save him but it was useless. I come to you again to place at your sweet disposal my great fortune. You can do as you please with it, if only you will marry me tonight. You owe it to your father to protect him and I propose to make it easy for you. I'm sure you would soon learn to love me. (Advances ardently.) Come, do your duty.

LATANE—(Emphatically.) You say for me to do my duty. Do you mean it?

SEARS—It would make me very happy indeed.

LATANE—Then listen. Once I asked the best friend I ever had to advise me. This is what he said: "Keep your heart right, and follow it where ever it leads you." I've been following his advice, and tonight I'm glad to *do my duty* by saying to you, the path to heaven is no straighter than my heart leads me to Frank Efforton. (Points to door.) Please be kind enough to go.

SEARS—(Savagely.) You shall go with me, and it would be better for you if you had gone

with less persuasion. (Attempts to throw scarf over her face. She escapes him, running by table from which she takes revolver, leveling it at him.)

LATANE—*Stop!* you fiend! Or I swear your blood will be on my hands. With all your millions you are not a gentleman, and rather than give you my life I shall take it myself. (Points revolver to her temple. Enter Trusty, taking gun from her and pointing it at Sears.)

TRUSTY—Ho-ho-ho-held on da'. Toch dat gal and I'll th'w bofe barrels into yer.

SEARS—(Reaching for his gun.)

TRUSTY—(Advancing shaking gun.) Up wid dem dirty hands. I'se er nigger, but I'll kill yer if yer den't. (Sears raises hands.) Now bat yer eyes en I'll shoot yer goozle off.

LATANE—O, it's Trusty!

TRUSTY—Don't monkey wid me now, honey. I'se got bofe hands full. I'se er gwine ter take dis hycna cut to de doah en give him a few er my chicicest kicks right up de middle er de street. (To Sears.) 'Bcut! Face! Forward! En when yer gits three paces outen de doah halt en squat 'bout five inches so'se I kin git action on yer. March. (They leave stage. L. Sears looking pinched. Trusty looks back over his shoulder.) Mr. Frank'll be hur in er minit. (Exit.)

LATANE—(Joyously.) Frank is coming. And he shall find me playing his old sweet song. (Sits at piano and sings chorus of "Dearie." Just as she is singing "Give me your hand; say you understand," enter Frank smiling and advancing to her. At conclusion he extends arms, saying:

FRANK—I understand. (Latane falls into his arms.)

Enter Trusty, limping.

TRUSTY—(To audience.) Ef I gct ter do any more kickin' I'se gwine ter git me er pair er box-toed boots. (Sees Frank and Latane.) Now what dy yer think er dat? Mr. Frank. (He is not heard. Gets louder.) *Mr. Frank!* (Gets no response. Shouts.) *MR. FRANK!* (This should be done hurriedly so as not to prolong the embrace. Trusty draws gun and fires it. Frank and Latane spring apart and Frank makes for Trusty who levels gun on him.) Ho-ho-ho-hold on da'. You ain't axed me fun dat gurl yit.

FRANK—May I have her, Trusty?

TRUSTY—Duse she take my place?

FRANK—(Laughing.) Nobody can get your place, Trusty. Latane he has been a faithful friend, and the only sunshine I have known for three long and weary months. He would always say you loved me, and I'm ashamed to cconfess I doubted it.

TRUSTY—I knowed, didn't I, Miss Latane?

LATANE—How did you know?

TRUSTY—You tole me.

LATANE—*What!*

TRUSTY—I, I, I, Er, er, er—I meant ter say a lectle bird tole me. (To audience.) En she's de bird. Ain't da uffin else I kin do fer ycu?

FRANK—Yes. Accept our sincere thanks for your true friendship.

TRUSTY—Don't mention it. I'se as happy es bofe er you. Now be good chil'n. I'se er gwine en git some licenges, en er preacher. (Exit, L.)

FRANK—He's a dear old negro. We shall care for him as long as he lives. Little girl, I'm so happy. Can you forgive me for doubting you? I thought you loved another and had forgotten me.

LATANE—Frank, I have not forgotten you for one little minute.

FRANK—It is sweet to hear you say that. I want to hear it every day of my life. May I?

LATANE—I know I love you well enough, and feel that I shall never be happy without you, but—who will care for Daddy?

FRANK—You and I. Where is he?

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LATANE—(Pointing to room.) In there. (Frank starts to room, meeting Mr. Cashton at door.)

MR. CASHTON—Frank, my boy! Forgive me. Forgive me.

FRANK—I have nothing to forgive you, Mr. Cashton. The past is a thousand years behind us. My face is set to the future. I'm beginning life anew, and, as at first, by begging you. I love your daughter, sir, and ask that you give me the opportunity to prove it.

MR. CASHTON—Frank, these trying days have taught me that your love is returned in a full measure of devotion. She loves you with all her womanly heart, and nothing could make me happier than to see her strong and pure love requited, by a noble man like yourself.

FRANK—(Taking Mr. Cashton's hand.) My word of honor, sir, that you shall not have cause to regret this greatest of gifts. Now I have another request to make of you. You are to live with us.

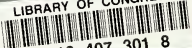
MR. CASHTON—Frank, your goodness overwhelms me. I have not many days left me, and I only ask that they be spent in quiet and peace. My faithful girl, (Taking Latane's hand). My dutiful boy. (Taking Frank's hand, and joining them.) Frank, she is all I've got in the world, but I give her to you freely because I know her heart is yours. (Enter Trusty, L., unnoticed), and I pray that you both may be as happy always as I am now.

TRUSTY—*Amen.*

CURTAIN—The End.

NOTE—The songs mentioned in this play can be supplied by us.—*O. P. Parker Company.*

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